The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia

Edited by Gyan Prakash, Michael Laffan & Nikhil Menon

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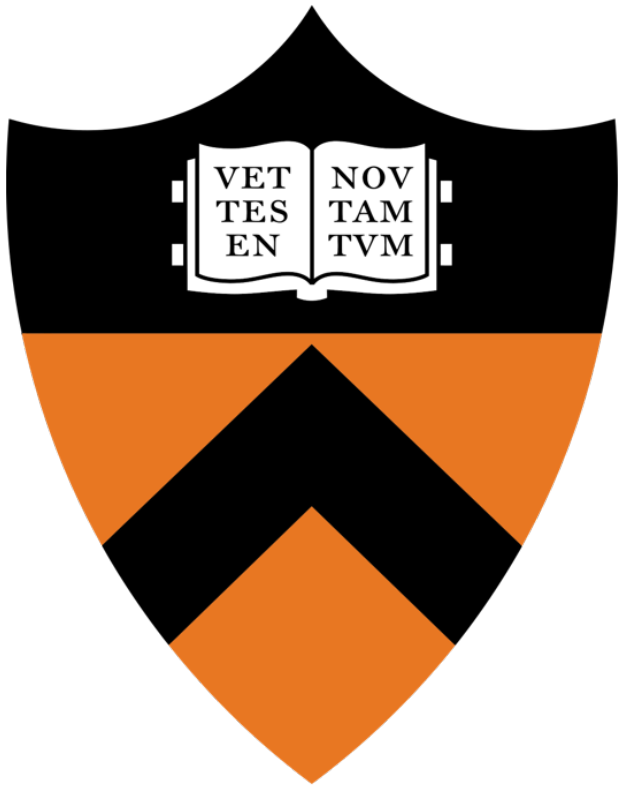

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Gyan Prakash, Michael Laffan, and Nikhil Menon

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Cover image: April 1955: People jostling in the street during the Bandung Conference held at Bandung in Indonesia. (© Ernst Haas/Getty Images)

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Introduction: The Postcolonial Moment

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In the aftermath of Independence and Partition, Saadat Hasan Manto, the incomparable Urdu short-story writer, asked: "When we were enslaved, we could imagine freedom, but now that we are free, how will we imagine subjection? But the question is are we really free?"[1] Manto was clearly questioning the value of postcolonial freedom bought with millions of slaughtered and uprooted lives. Could such freedom magically eradicate subjection when it was itself a slave to religious fanaticism and barbarism? In the two decades after the end of the Second World War, neatly bisected by the Bandung Conference of 1955, leaders across Asia struggled with Manto's question about the real meaning of postcolonial freedom. They launched projects that sought to actualize their dreams in polities, economies, societies, and laws that would follow the end of formal colonialism. The following chapters examine these efforts to found postcolonial futures in South and Southeast Asia.

The term "postcolonial" does not just mean the period after the end of colonialism but also the condition produced by being worked over by colonialism—that is, as an aftermath, as an afterlife. This is how postcolonial theory has approached this concept, with a great deal of work examining the impact of colonialism in the field of literature, culture, history, political thought, and movements. We can think of Edward Said's classic *Orientalism* in this fashion as a study of how a scholarly discipline emerged from the practice of colonial power. A great number of studies following Said fleshed out this idea, showing how canonical literary works and political treatises have to be understood in the aftermath of colonialism. While we have learnt a great deal from these studies, another meaning of the "post" in postcolonial has remained less explored. This is the postcolonial future that the anticolonial leaders sought to build. Historians long conceded this period to political scientists, sociologists, and economists. The underlying assumption was that history ended with the formal termination of

colonialism. This has changed in recent years as historians have increasingly turned to the periods immediately prior to and after independence.[2] We are now beginning to get a picture of the contingency and contention that accompanied the establishment of nation-states and their claims to legitimacy.[3] The chapters in this collection form part of and build on this growing literature.

We take the postcolonial moment to be longer than an instant, extending from the end of the Second World War to the middle of the 1960s. This is because postcolonial projects did not only entail the transfer of power. The efforts to bring into existence what the discourses named as postcolonial were ambitious. They aspired to overcome the colonial legacy of subjection and exploitation, and meet with the challenge of organizing multireligious and multiethnic populations into coherent polities. A conscious sense of novelty, of trying to bring newness into the political world, defined this moment.

Speaking at the inaugural Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in March 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru articulated the sense of a new beginning, asserting: "We stand at the end of an era and on the threshold of a new period of history." In the decade following the end of the Second World War, leaders across South and Southeast Asia began to found states that would express this mood of a fresh start. These efforts occurred against the background of changes produced by the war. The Second World War, after all, was not a mere prelude to independence. For even if we are accustomed to seeing Europe as the main theater of conflict, Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper have reminded us how the "Great Asian War was longer and ultimately bloodier than Europe's civil war." In the crescent extending from Bengal, through Burma, and stretching to the Malay Peninsula and reaching Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies, the conflict claimed around 24 million lives in lands occupied by Japan, the lives of 3 million Japanese, and 3.5 million more in India through war-related famines.[4] Japan had crushed European empires in Asia, destroying structures of imperial administration and control and causing social and political upheavals throughout the region. The British Raj was still in command, but strapped. The fall of Singapore in February 1942, followed six weeks later by the disastrous helter-skelter retreat from Burma before the advancing Japanese army, soon to be joined by Indian National Army soldiers in Rangoon, had stripped the British Empire of its prestige. Equally the lightning defeat of Dutch forces, culminating with the fall of Batavia on March 5, 1942, had dealt a final blow to Dutch pretensions, with their own metropolitan government already in exile in London.

The debacle in Burma had also sent 600,000 refugees fleeing into India by land and sea, of whom nearly 80,000 had died while making the perilous journey over mountains and through thick jungles. Tens of thousands were crammed into refugee camps in Assam, Bengal, and Madras. On top of it all, the Bengal Famine raged in 1943–44. The government had managed to crush the Congress and its "Quit India" movement, throwing Gandhi, Nehru, and scores of other leaders in prison. But the cost of suppressing a widespread rebellion was high. Railway and telegraph networks were sabotaged and administrative offices suffered attacks.[5] Military and police forces were pressed into action. The Raj was now an occupying and hostile force, besieged by resentment on the ground.

Indeed, a widespread restlessness was in the air throughout Asia. The war had shattered old patterns of social and political authority. As European powers tried to reestablish the control that the Japanese interregnum had destroyed, they faced implacable opposition. "This was Asia's revolutionary moment," write Bayly and Harper, "when many previously disempowered groups in society—women, the young, workers and peasants—took the political initiative to rebuild their communities, salvage their livelihoods and regain their dignity."[6] Mao in China, Sukarno and the revolutionary "youth" (*Pemuda*) in Indonesia, radicals and communist insurgents in Malaya, and Aung San in Burma appealed to the masses. A sense of epochal change was in the air as a convulsive mix of nationalism, communism, and ideals of social and religious freedom, or demands for mastery, tugged at the populace. The world appeared on the brink of being turned upside down.

War had changed state–society relations throughout Asia. Everywhere the mobilization for war and militarization brought the state directly into the lives of the people. The old pattern of institutional politics was not dead but mass politics sharply rose to surface. How would the new order respond to the reality of mass mobilization?

Globally, the tide was turning toward ethnically homogenous nation-states. By this time, Mark Mazower suggests, the League of Nations' international law-driven approach had run its course.[7] As Hannah Arendt observed, even the League's Minority Treaties already

> said in a plain language what until then had been only implied in the working system of nation-states, namely that only nationals could be citizens, only people of the same national origin could enjoy the full protection of legal institutions, that persons of different nationality needed some law of exception until or unless they were completely assimilated and divorced from their origin.[8]

If any ambiguity remained, the war cleared it. Hitler's brutal treatment of the Jews, followed by the postwar plight of refugees and stateless persons, destroyed the League's strategy of protecting minorities with legal safeguards. Those rendered stateless realized that "loss of national rights was identical with human rights, that the former inevitably entailed the latter."[9] What quickly consolidated was the idea of states representing ethnically homogenous territories. Accordingly, more than a million ethnic Germans were deported to newly created West Germany from Czechoslovakia after the war. The partition of Palestine and the establishment of Israel also followed the same logic, namely that Jews could enjoy full political rights only in a state of their own. The immediate effect of this nation-state logic was to render the Palestinians refugees and displaced persons, repeating what had already occurred on a much larger scale in the Partition of British India.

Of course, there were currents pushing against the global tide of nation-states. Léopold Senghor in French West Africa and Aimé Cesaire in the Caribbean struggled to seek self-determination for colonies without state sovereignty. To them, postcolonial federations of France and its former colonies, rather than nation-states, offered real possibilities of freedom and equality.[10] Soon enough, however, the politics of decolonization defeated these alternatives. Afraid that they would become colonized

by their former colonies, the French National Assembly passed the *loi cadre* in 1956 that, instead of federation, offered self-government to its African territories. This was contrary to Senghor's idea; he responded by forming the Mali Federation in 1959, lasting only a year. The nation-state logic had won.

Driving the logic of a homogenously defined nation-state in India were the waves of Hindu–Muslim violence and the uprooting of millions by Partition. Bengal, which had already witnessed slaughter in August 1946 following Jinnah's call for "Direct Action," experienced another bout of killings in rural Noakhali and Tippera in November of that year. While Gandhi camped in Noakhali to stem the violence, the killings spread westwards to neighboring Bihar and then to the United Provinces. Punjab, of course, was the eye of the storm. By early 1947, large parts of this "land of five rivers" were up in flames. Cities like Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur, Rawalpindi, Multan, and Sialkot were boiling with scalding attacks and counterattacks.[11] It was amidst this horror that the two parties readied to divide the assets.

Equally, violence and the settling of scores dominated the politics of Indonesia and Burma, not to mention other parts of the former Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, such as the Philippines. Largely seen as lackeys of the Dutch, who had allowed them sizeable pensions in exchange for their arable land, the Malay royal families of the Sumatran coast would be driven from their palaces and killed by mixed forces of revolutionaries. This terrified their regal kin across the straits who were far more anxious about the Malayan Communist Party than their returning British protectors. In West Java and Sulawesi, meanwhile, remnants of Islamic militias would coalesce into the Darul Islam movement that sought a more avowedly religious form of the nation, sometimes fighting the returning Dutch, sometimes battling the cash- and materiel-strapped Republican forces of Sukarno, which were then engaged in a diplomatic tussle for recognition as the rightful inheritors of the nation.

The newly declared Indonesia was not merely rent by Islamist and secularist tensions, but by communist insurgents too. And in mid-September of 1948, members of the *Front Demokrasi Rakyat* (FDR, People's Democratic Front), which was losing a role in the national army then being rationalized under Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta, would attempt their own coup at Madiun, Java, which was put down within three months by bayonets and shallow graves.

Such divisions foreshadowed the tensions to be balanced by Sukarno in the years to come, from formal Dutch acknowledgment of independence in 1949, to his centralization of authority by 1957, and until the second, much larger Communist putsch of 1965. Perhaps the brightest moment for Sukarno came with his hosting, at Bandung, of the Afro-Asian Conference of 1955, at much the same time that U Nu of Burma would hold his own version of a world assembly in the form of the Sixth Buddhist Council. Yet this seemingly universal meeting masked the divisions afflicting a nation forged between the final expansion of Burmese power in the eighteenth century and its affirmation and decapitation under the British conquests in the nineteenth century, culminating with the exile of King Thibaw in 1885.

En route to independence, Aung San had played the role of father of the nation and founder of the army—an army created, like so many militias in Indonesia, by the Japanese authorities. Indeed, Aung San, once a committed Marxist seeking aid

from the Chinese Communist Party in Amoy, was recruited by the Japanese in China and sent to the island of Hainan for training with the "Thirty Comrades" who would form the backbone of the Burmese National Army. Although the British had no real enthusiasm for dealing with a man who was as much a collaborator as Bose had been (Churchill was certainly vocal on this score), more pragmatic figures like Mountbatten recognized that he alone could bring the numerous factions of Burmese society together, ranging from the Burman political classes schooled in Marxism like himself, to the appointed heads of upland minorities like the Shan, Karen and Kachin. And, as with Indonesia, these communities were coaxed into the nation under the guise of federalism, with an option of separation (after ten years). Or, at least that is what the Panglong Conference of February 1947 seemed to offer.

Had he continued, Aung San may well have become a political kinsman of Sukarno, who had dispatched so many Indonesian workers to Burma under Japanese rule. Yet, some six months before the onset of independence on January 4, 1948, Aung San would be murdered with his cabinet colleagues in waiting on July 19, 1947. And while U Nu would assume the mantle of the state, he was ultimately in thrall to the army as guarantor of the nation, especially under another comrade from the Japanese days, Ne Win, who would take power in March 1962.

Set against this context, the chapters in this book address how efforts to start something new against the background of the old produced the postcolonial moment as a time of flawed beginnings and of roads explored, taken, and closed. They bring into view the immediate decades after the Second World War not as a straightforward case of transfer of power or an inevitable succession from imperial to a postimperial stage of history, but as an extraordinarily productive moment that defined what was postcolonial.

This moment was marked by fragility. Emerging out of the Second World War and its tumultuous aftermath, doubt and uncertainty riddled postcolonial imaginings. Well into the 1960s there was a sense that independence was illusory, incomplete, or reversible. Apart from the fear of being recolonized by European nations, these newly independent states also had to contend with the realignment of global power after the Second World War. The postcolonial moment was also the period of the global Cold War, and the new nation states of South and Southeast Asia had to negotiate this in their foreign policies—making momentous decisions about what their fundamental "interests" and "values" were. As Odd Arne Westad, David Engerman, and Paul McGarr have shown, the Cold War wasn't a conflict that these nations could sit out.[12]

Certainly, this lack of choice played out in Indonesia. As Rémy Madinier has shown, despite the rhetoric of neutrality, the Cold War effectively set the scene for the domestic rivalry of belief and unbelief within the cascading cabinets of Sukarno.[13] The threats to the newfound freedom were not simply external anymore—the enemy, now, could often be within. Even as postcolonial leaders moved to create new states, dissenting and different voices could be heard. Our first chapter, by Rotem Geva, analyzes how Yashpal's great Partition novel in Hindi, *Jhootha Sach* (False Truth), advanced the communist line that freedom was a hoax. But the novel's narration of the moment of independence suggests that the seeds of betrayal were sown in the Hindu–Muslim violence preceding and during Partition. The new nation continued to bear

the scars of Partition—as evidenced in the cycles of food scarcity and hoarding, refugee camps and rehabilitation, and evacuee property and corruption, or in the continued patriarchal violence against women. In this sense, the birth of the nation itself was flawed, even as the novel held out a hope for the future. Like in India, the communists in Pakistan faced state repression. Kamran Asdar Ali shows that this was not because of their political strength or sway over the masses, but because they appeared to have an outsized presence in the eyes of the fledgling state anxiously policing an already-constricted public space. Documenting the early history of the Communist Party of Pakistan, the labor movements it activated, and the state repression it experienced, Ali not only narrates histories of labor and communism in Pakistan but also offers a new perspective on the alternative visions that existed for the country.

Moving our narrative further eastward, Mandy Sadan's chapter highlights that, with the ever-present threat of recolonization, independence was not perceived the same way in postcolonial Burma, a nation that had only been separated from India in 1937. Burma may have achieved political independence on January 4, 1948, but was this its postcolonial moment? Sadan addresses this moment from two perspectives: the lasting fear among Burmese leaders that colonialism had not ended with the departure of the British and the question of what independence meant for the largely autonomous border tribal regions of erstwhile British Burma. Chiara Formichi also showcases the fragility of the postcolonial in the rise of Darul Islam in Indonesia. Here, she explores the political and military tensions between Kartosuwiryo's aspirations for establishing an Islamic state (either throughout Indonesia or at least in West Java) and Sukarno's commitment to a non-confessional Pancasila state. Together, these contributions highlight a postcolonial moment punctuated by vulnerability, uncertainty, anxiety, and violence.

Mobility and turmoil were also prominent in this historical conjuncture. At the end of the Second World War, the colonized societies were in upheaval. As the British Empire prepared to retreat in South Asia, its endgames produced profoundly unsettling effects. Southeast Asian societies, already convulsed by Japanese conquest and then defeat, were thrown into crisis by attempts made by old imperial powers to reestablish control. But a lot had changed. For one thing, Japan had destroyed the idea that the Europeans were invincible, and had even created platforms for indigenous organization and militarization, much as the British themselves had militarized India and Ceylon with the rhetoric of preparedness to face the Japanese onslaught. Also, and more importantly, anticolonial activists across South and Southeast Asia were aware of each other, and even tried to coordinate their struggles. Imperial disarray and the widely different and often divergent struggles for postcolonial power created an atmosphere of unrest, mobility, and violence. Pressing questions of national and cultural identity, relations between the majority and minority, between elites and subalterns, and between law and property, were thrust on center stage. In India, the violence of Partition and the movement of refugees raised urgent questions about housing and property.

It was in this state of emergency that, Rohit De argues, the office of the Custodian laid out key legal principles for property and economy. Beginning as a temporary emergency measure that sought to restore the property to the original owners, the

Custodian emerged as a constitutionally protected office that could expropriate property without compensation in the interests of refugee rehabilitation and the restoration of normal "economic life." The displacements of population and the making of refugees did not occur only due to Partition. As Sunil Amrith reminds us, Tamil and Indian identities couldn't easily reconcile because modern citizenship in mid-century South and Southeast Asia was actually predicated on a disavowal of migration. From the 1930s, emergent nationalists in Burma, Ceylon, and Malaya made indigenist arguments to stem the flow of migrants from India; on the other hand, Indian nationalist discourse took a dim view of the emigration that allowed Indians to be mistreated across the Bay. Tracking the postcolonial legislative measures addressing migrant and returnee populations in India, Ceylon, Burma, and Malaya, Amrith concludes that they all chose border controls and immobility—thereby foregoing the claims of millions of migrants—because the world of freely circulating labor was incompatible with that of nation-states. The impact of the shift from the interwar imperial geography, which permitted migration across the British colonial possessions, to national geography after the Second World War was manifest in the predicament faced by Tamils in Southeast Asia and India. Bhavani Raman describes how the "cultural turn" in Tamil politics in the 1950s questioned the relationship of Tamils to the Indian nation and reemphasized their relationship to the Bay of Bengal. In the changed context, the memory of migration across the Bay became enlisted to forge the idea of a territorial Tamil nation. The idea of the returnee was instrumental in imagining this Tamil nation, for it evoked the sense of a new society to come and marked this society's responsibility to the indigent poor who had to be provided for.

A sense of vulnerability may have accompanied the birth of new nations and forced them to fight even harder against alternate projects seeking cultural and social rights, but fragility was productive; it impelled various pedagogical projects to institutionalize the postcolonial state. As Gyan Prakash's chapter argues, the postwar turmoil and the Partition bloodshed committed the Indian nationalist leaders to frame the constitution for a strong state. Nehru, Patel, and Ambedkar agreed that instead of a federation, the nation had to be built on state sovereignty. This meant importing the colonial state almost intact. However, they made one crucial choice. India was to be a democracy. The constitution-making reveals the leaders trying to negotiate the tension between a state with extraordinary powers with which it would forge national unity out of conflicts and initiate far-reaching social transformations, and yet guarantee democratic rights.

This balancing act included the state's direct role in instituting the system of adult franchise amidst the turmoil of population movements and the influx of refugees. Ornit Shani describes the role of the Constituent Assembly Secretariat in patiently working with local officials and citizens' associations to cut through the details of citizenship and voter registration in preparing the roll for elections based on adult franchise. Tracking the activity of the Constituent Assembly Secretariat and its engagement with these bodies, Shani argues that while the details of India's constitution were formulated by the Constituent Assembly, the work of putting together the first electoral rolls, and the national conversation it sparked, democratized popular political imagination and aided its institutional embedding. If the poor had to be instructed in the protocols of

adult franchise, building a postcolonial nation also required that they be educated. However, as Neeti Nair recounts, the leaders turned away from the pre-independence stress on primary education. Nair argues that the new state moved quickly toward higher education in science and engineering, and revealed a marked bias toward quality over quantity—choosing to focus on generating a highly skilled minority rather than attempting broad educational coverage. In the very early debates over mass education (education for all as a fundamental right) versus education for "an aristocracy of talent and virtues," it was the latter that dominated, with an eye to fast-track industrialization that would draw India out of poverty. Observable here is a shift from education as a social to a state project.

Finally, the state that emerged out of the turmoil of the postcolonial moment was marked by strong pedagogical functions, even if elections would become fewer and farther between. This was a key feature in the realm of economy, where it asserted that its ends of building a national economy were demonstrably different from those of the colonial economy. In building this claim, the idea of the postcolonial economy had to be infused with extra-economic substance—an ethic (religious, political, or moral). As Nikhil Menon shows, in the transition from anticolonial nationalism to national statehood, this political realm had to awkwardly contend with the realities of modern state building and realpolitik. Thus, Indian planners argued that if India opted for planning, this was as much about mobilizing Indians as new citizen-subjects as building the economy. Planners emphasized the distinctiveness of the Indian experiment—the braiding of centralized planning and parliamentary democracy. For the experiment to be a true success, they believed, the Indian electorate had to be involved in and support the planning project. For "democratic planning" to work, citizens had to be "plan-conscious."

Benjamin Siegel describes how stirring calls for land reform and peasant power made in the 1930s gave way to pedagogical projects to produce peasants as new national subjects. In place of the moral charge with which nationalist and peasant activists had denounced landlordism and called for social justice, the law, legislation, and technology emerged as the means to build a postcolonial rural society. Siegel thus interrogates the possibility of a distinctly postcolonial Indian ethic of land and labor: one that flickered briefly before being snuffed out. Equally, Julia Stephens tells a similar story of the dimming of the prospect for an Islamic economy and promises of Islamic social justice that were widely nourished during the interwar period. These quickly disappeared in the quicksand of state building in Pakistan. Feeling its very existence as a breakaway state threatened by India, it was decidedly unappealing for Pakistan to court the bruising social conflicts that building a just Islamic economy would have entailed. Like Pakistan, Indonesia also experienced the need for a unitary past as President Sukarno, who, until the effective end of his presidency in 1965, claimed that his state was in constant resistance to colonial forces. As Michael Laffan shows, it was this past that Sukarno's Muslim opponents would try to claim in 1963. Foremost among them was the popular writer Hamka, who was then being targeted by Sukarno's communist allies. This chapter shows how Hamka (and Islamic scholars) would seemingly emerge victorious in 1963 against a supposedly Dutch vision of an

Indianized past and offer a more purely Arabic Islam as the bedrock of an eternal Indonesia. Their victory was the briefest of the postcolonial moment, though, but one that highlights its precariousness deep into the Cold War.

That fragility was not limited to Indonesia. As this book shows throughout, the postcolonial project everywhere was riddled with doubts, anxiety, turmoil, and conflicts well into the 1960s. Placed in trying times, nationalists of various stripes launched a variety of projects to fashion independent futures. These projects could not but reflect their shared context too—the postwar upheavals and the messy imperial retreat, divisions and conflicts within societies, and the growing attempt by the two superpowers to remake the postcolonial world. Nor could they wish away the heritage of colonialism even as their new states exuded a sense of building for the future after the unnatural interventions of Europe. Burdened by history, they sought to free themselves from it to constitute fresh beginnings. Thus, in returning to this long constitutive postcolonial moment in India, Pakistan, Burma, and Indonesia, we uncover and analyze the attempts to strike new paths, offering an understanding of their successes and failures that remain in question today even as very different politics remake spaces finally imagined to be well beyond the grip of colonial power.

Notes

1 Saadat Hasan Manto, "Murli ke Dhun," in *Dastavej*, 5 (New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 1993). Our translation.

2 Joya Chatterji *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) is among rare works on South Asia that crosses the 1947 Rubicon to show the persistence of the colonial into the postcolonial.

3 See, for example, *Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan, 1947–1970*, eds. Taylor C. Sherman, William Gould, and Sarah Ansari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

4 Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap, 2007), 7.

5 For a comprehensive account of the Quit India movement and its suppression, see F. G. Hutchins, *India's Revolution: Gandhi and the Quit India Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

6 Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 517.

7 Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

8 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harvest Books, 1973), 275.

9 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 292.

10 See Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

11 Historians, journalists, and novelists have narrated the gruesome stories of slaughter, rape, looting, and uprooted lives in great detail and many times. The literature is vast. For some recent accounts, see Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence,*

Nationalism, and History in India (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Neeti Nair, *Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Nisid Hajari, *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2015).

12 Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Makings of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); David C. Engerman, "Learning from the East: Soviet Experts and India in the Era of Competitive Coexistence." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33, no. 2 (2013): 227–38; David C. Engerman, "Mission from Moscow: Soviet Advisers and the Second Indian Five-Year Plan." *NCEEER Working Paper*, September 30, 2014; Paul McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and the Indian Subcontinent, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

13 Rémy Madinier, "*Lawan dan Kawan* (Friends and Foes): Indonesian Islam and Communism during the Cold War (1945–1960)," in *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945–1962*, eds. Christopher E. Goscha and Christian F. Ostermann (Washington, DC and Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Center and Stanford, 2009), 356–76.

1

"False Truth": Disillusionment and Hope in the Decade after Independence

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Introduction

Having colored truth with imagination, I am entrusting it to the public, which has always been deceived by lies yet has persistently and courageously sought after truth.
—Yashpal[1]

This is the epigraph to *Jhootha Sach* (False Truth), one of the most acclaimed novels of twentieth-century Hindi literature, a social realist work extending over 900 pages and published in two volumes in 1958 and 1960. The epigraph and title of the work revolve around truth, reality, and their literary representation, and the epigraph indicates that the reality in question is specifically a sociopolitical one. Furthermore, the title "False Truth" echoes the declaration made in February 1948 by the Communist Party of India (CPI) that the independence gained in August 1947 was false. Taken together, these initial signs locate the novel within the realm of Marxist ideology, progressive literature, and the contemporary controversies about the true meaning of independence. As we will see, for Yashpal this reckoning cannot take place unless Partition and its aftermath have been taken into account.

In the 1930s and 1940s, as a transfer of power in one form or another became imminent, leftist political and intellectual circles expected that independence would not merely amount to a political transfer of power, but would also effectuate major transformations in social relations—within the family and between classes and castes. This period of possibility nourished the radicalization of the literary sphere and the establishment of the All India Progressive Writers Association (AIPWA) in 1936. Soon the movement spread beyond its Urdu and English literati core to shape literature in other vernacular languages.[2] It should be noted that the term

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"progressive" signifies a broad and by no means coherent field.[3] Yet it possessed some fundamental convictions about the politics of literature that inspired a generation of writers, certainly Yashpal (1903–1976), the author of the novel under consideration.

Yashpal's fiction exemplifies the progressive conviction that aesthetics and politics were inseparable, as opposed to "art for art's sake." Broadly speaking, progressive writers were inclined to the realist mode and were influenced, to varying degrees, by Marxism and the CPI. In his youth, Yashpal was a member of the revolutionary Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA). He was involved in setting up bomb factories and in a failed attempt to assassinate Viceroy Lord Irwin. He was imprisoned for six years and, upon his release in 1938, he abandoned political activity and turned to politically committed literature. His first novel, *Dada Comrade* (1941), which is based on his experiences in the HSRA, describes the growing influence of Socialist ideology and labor issues on the revolutionaries. *Deshdrohi* (Enemy of the Nation, 1943) tells of an army doctor who becomes a committed Communist following his exposure to life in the Soviet Union. The other protagonist belongs to the Socialist wing of the Congress Party; he is portrayed much more favorably than the leader of the Gandhian faction, who exemplifies the Gandhian hegemonic tendency to appropriate the voice of the working class and diffuse its struggles through class conciliation.[4]

These and subsequent novels by Yashpal pay special attention to female sexuality, gender relations, and the oppression of women in Indian society, offering models of strong and independent women who defy social and familial norms. This is in continuity with the centrality of female subjectivity to progressive writing and, more generally, to modern Indian literature since the nineteenth century. The novel was the genre through which the nationalist imagination developed in India, and most such novels centered on the question of women's freedom.[5] The tropes of the feminine ideal were a shared framework for Indian writers to engage in debates on tradition and modernity, social reform, and Indian nationalism.[6] Yashpal's novels expand the notion of freedom and politics to include the intimate sphere of romantic love and sexual relations.[7]

If Yashpal's earlier novels articulate visions of social justice and equality at home and in the world in anticipation of independence, then *Jhootha Sach*, written a decade after independence, is a fictional commentary on the extent to which such expectations had materialized. Perhaps its most prominent feature is the novel's historicity. *Jhootha Sach* exemplifies realism as a representational form aspiring to "close resemblance to what is real."[8] This commitment is evident throughout the novel. Its plotline and fictional characters intermesh with historical events and figures. As Vasudha Dalmia notes, the novel provides a careful historical reconstruction of the period based on interviews, newspaper archives, and the author's travels.[9] As the drama of Partition unfolds, the main characters' trajectories become totally determined by the political, and "the newspaper and the novel merge seamlessly into each other as genres."[10] Beyond the level of high politics, the novel elaborates the prosaic practices and social interactions that make up people's lives, describes daily situations in great detail and visual clarity, and accurately portrays specific urban spaces and internal settings, from the splendid bungalows of New Delhi to the shabby residences of refugees.

Such attention to reality is paired with epic monumentality—the novel's sheer length and its multiple subplots and characters. The numerous dialogues in the novel

create a complex heteroglossia, giving voice to a wide array of Hindi registers that effectively convey class, region, and gender differences, as well as power relations. Together with the diversity of clothing styles and body languages, they amount to an ambitious attempt to encompass social reality in its totality. This exercise echoes the classical realist novels of the nineteenth century, which are emblematic of the nationalist imagination.[11] As the two volumes' titles—*Vatan aur Desh* (Homeland and Nation) and *Desh ka Bhavishya* (The Nation's Future)—indicate, narrating the nation is explicitly the goal of *Jhootha Sach*.

Thus, the novel's portrayal of the history of the nation cannot be considered apart from the author's choice to utilize the form of realism to represent historical reality, for the relationship between realism and reality is far from straightforward.[12] The classic realist novel, to which *Jhootha Sach* is greatly indebted, has been under attack for its alleged naïve mimetic aspirations.[13] How does the employment of realism in *Jhootha Sach* influence its portrayal of the postcolonial moment? How does the form convey the ideology of the text?

In addressing these questions, I take my cue from Ulka Anjaria's sensitive analysis of realist novels in late-colonial India. For Anjaria, rather than assuming an unproblematic correspondence between reality and literary representation, realism in the colony is marked by aesthetic ambivalence, articulating the utopian sensibilities of this transitional period—the charged coexistence of promise and disillusionment.[14] I suggest that it is exactly this coexistence that underlies *Jhootha Sach* and its representation of the postcolonial moment, and that the close proximity of hope and disappointment is embodied in the blend of "truth" and "lie" in the novel's title. I further suggest that the ambivalence underlying this novel is linked specifically to the coinciding of independence and Partition. While the reference to these as the "twin events" of 1947 has become almost a cliché, the novel explores precisely what that twinning means.

The novel's historicity thus goes far beyond mere chronicling (though this impulse is certainly prevalent in the text) to offer a particular interpretation of the postcolonial moment. The realist, large-canvassed, monumental form is essential to this undertaking, as it demonstrates the concrete ways in which the Partition violence interlinked both with India's colonial legacy and with the political machinery laid out by the Congress in perpetuating and (re)shaping relations between people and between the independent state and its citizenry. Such historicization distinguishes *Jhootha Sach* from other works of "partition literature" that are focused on the violence itself. It also challenges the contemporary Communist interpretation that failed to take Partition seriously. Before developing this argument, let me introduce the main plotline and characters.

The novel's plot

As indicated by its title, the first volume narrates the transfiguration of homeland (*vatan*) to nation-state and the violent uprooting involved in this process. It is set in pre-Partition Lahore, and its main protagonist is Jaidev Puri, a young Hindu Urdu

writer and journalist with Marxist leanings. Puri is gifted and ambitious, yet his lower-middle-class background makes it hard for him to succeed. Puri, who takes part in the Quit India movement, is imprisoned for the duration of the war and dedicates his time to reading and writing in hopes of developing a literary career. However, upon his release, he finds that the war has exacerbated his family's financial troubles. He takes a low-paying job as a journalist for an Urdu daily, but when he writes a principled editorial condemning communal violence and laying a share of responsibility on the Congress party, he is forced to resign. During this time he also falls in love with Kanak, the daughter of a well-respected nationalist leader and owner of a publishing house, Pundit Girdharilal Datta. Although Pundit Girdharilal is quite liberal in the upbringing of his daughters, he does not allow Kanak to marry Puri. Thus, Puri seems to have hit the limits of his social advancement in both his professional and his personal life.

The other protagonist of the novel is Puri's younger sister, Tara, who is intelligent, educated, and beautiful. Tara is secretly in love with Asad, a Muslim Communist, but her family wants to marry her to a well-off and uneducated brute, a member of the right-wing RSS, who takes part in the increasingly aggressive violence in the city. Tara hopes that her progressive brother will help her avoid this miserable marriage, but Puri succumbs to the pressures of the extended family and its patriarchal values. This is a great blow to Tara and a hint to the betrayals Puri will commit in the second part of the novel.

The siblings' personal struggles unfold against the backdrop of the escalating communal violence in the city, culminating in the Partition riots. Tara's wedding night is traumatic: after she is brutalized by her new husband, Muslim rioters set her in-laws' house on fire. Tara escapes but is abducted and raped by a Muslim *goonda*. She eventually finds herself trapped with several other abducted women in Sheikhpura, to be sold out. The women are finally rescued and transferred to the Indian side of the border. The last pages of the first volume thus carefully reconstruct the horrific sexual violence to which women on both sides of the border were subjected, demonstrating how the resolution of the national question culminated in the violent demarcation of boundaries on both territory and women's bodies.

This chapter focuses mainly on the second volume, *Desh ka Bhavishya*, which begins in the aftermath of the Partition riots in Lahore and follows its uprooted Punjabi protagonists into the cities of northern India. The first scene depicts a destitute Puri waiting in line for his food ration in a refugee camp. But his life changes when he meets Vishwanath Sood, an influential local Congress leader who was imprisoned with him during the war. Sood extends his patronage to Puri, granting him an Urdu printing press and a house left behind by a Muslim, and uses his political connections to provide him with abundant printing orders from government offices and private businesses. Soon, Puri can fulfill an old dream and start his own Urdu weekly, which supports Sood's political faction within the Punjab Congress. He is gradually incorporated into the Congress machinery and becomes a member of the legislative assembly. Moreover, the Partition crisis makes the upper-class family of Kanak more receptive toward Puri, and the two get married and run the weekly magazine together.

Resentful of her forced marriage to a morally dubious man and well aware of the painful rejection many abducted women face from their kin for their "defilement" by Muslims, Tara does not reach out to her family, including her brother. By merit of her intelligence, education, and impressive persona, she is singled out by the refugee camp authorities and finds employment as governess to the children of a wealthy New Delhi business family connected with the Congress. Gradually climbing up the social ladder, by the end of the novel Tara holds a top position at the central secretariat. She marries Dr. Pran Nath, an old acquaintance from Lahore who is a leading economist and architect of the second five-year plan. In the ten years that have passed since her miserable wedding night and abduction, Tara has rebuilt herself and helped other women to assert their wills against the Hindu patriarchy. She is courageous, honorable, even faultless, and her voice and choices convey the political and moral worldview of the text.

Tara's central role fits within the long literary tradition of approaching the burning dilemmas of modernity through the women's question. If previous literature focused on the ideal types of prostitute, widow, virgin, and goodwife, *Jhootha Sach* illuminates a new social category that emerged in 1947, interrogating, through Tara and the women surrounding her, the hardships and opportunities of the female refugee. Almost all refugee women in the novel, including Kanak and Tara, experience men's attempts to take sexual advantage of their vulnerability. The book is pioneering in its treatment of sexual violence and its long-term consequences for social and familial mores in post-1947 India, foreshadowing and ultimately buttressing the observations reached by anthropology and oral history in the late 1990s.[15]

Puri and Tara—the once-close siblings—become totally estranged from one another, signaling opposite trajectories: As we will see, Puri's signifies degeneration, whereas Tara's signals liberation and progress. Together they embody the close proximity of disillusionment and hope in the novel's portrayal of the postcolonial moment. It is to this that I now turn.

The novel's portrayal of history

Let us return to, and elaborate on, the interplay of structure and event in the narrative. The novel is often considered to be India's definitive novel on Partition. The acclaimed Hindi writer Bhisham Sahni, who published one of the most important novels on the subject (*Tamas*, or Darkness), is believed to have said, "The only novel about the Partition is Yashpal's *Jhootha Sach*; everything else is merely a footnote."[16] Yet I suggest that calling this a "partition novel" is misleading. Partition literature mostly focuses on the violence or else culminates in it, as in Manto's exploration of sexual violence in his short stories, or in Sahni's reconstruction of Partition's causes in *Tamas*.[17]

If *Jhootha Sach* concluded with its first volume, it would be quite typical, since it probes the growing tensions leading up to Partition and concludes with the violence of 1947. But the novel does not end there. The second volume explores

the nation's trajectory after 1947, interweaving the lives of its protagonists with the main historical landmarks of this decade—from the assassination of Gandhi in 1948 to the second general election of 1957. The novel narrates these events through a focus on the rehabilitation of the refugee characters, thereby illuminating how the transformations brought about by Partition interlinked with the process of nation- and state-building.

The novel meticulously demonstrates the interplay of the colonial legacy, Partition, and state-building in determining the characters' fates, and especially their diverse experiences as refugees. Partition is a crisis situation that renders the various refugees extremely vulnerable, deeply affecting their future circumstances. Having or not having the right connections determines whether Partition will mean a downhill trajectory or an upward course.[18]

Puri owes everything he has to his connection with the Congress at the moment of Partition. It is his connection with Sood at this particular moment of social upheaval that transforms him from an unemployed writer to the owner of a house and a printing press (both the property of a Muslim evacuee), then an editor, and finally a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Through his connections, other family members also get settled. Likewise, it is Partition that enables Tara to break through the chains of patriarchal society and gain independence. She owes a great deal of her progress to the connections she establishes at the Agarwala residence with government officials and Congress members. In fact, we can find a direct correlation in almost every refugee character in this novel between successful recovery and the ability to tap into the distributive network of the Congress.

Such an expansive view of Partition as a process reveals a remarkable grasp of this decade that historians, equipped with hindsight and archival sources, have only recently begun to develop. The novel's departure from previous fictional representations of Partition prefigures the recent historiographical move beyond the prelude to Partition and the experience of violence to Partition's impact on the subcontinent's social, political, and cultural histories.[19]

Looking at it the other way around, the novel not only historicizes Partition by linking it to processes of nation- and state-building, it also intervenes in contemporary debates about these processes by factoring Partition into its narrative. The next section will discuss how the novel articulates, clearly and forcefully, the Communist and Socialist criticism of the postcolonial Nehruvian state. I will then discuss how the novel simultaneously represents a sober assessment of the CPI and its dogmatism.

Disillusionment with the Nehruvian State: The Communist critique

Historian Indivar Kamtekar claims that one of the projects of nationalism and the state in independent India was the "concealment of continuity."[20] While some recent scholarship claims that the question of continuity as opposed to change in the transition to independence has become stale,[21] we should not lose sight of the fact that the question was very much on the minds of contemporaries and framed their understanding of the time they lived in. In daily newspapers, the argument

that "nothing has changed" was already prevalent in 1949, and the years after independence witnessed a constant and impatient comparison of the postcolonial situation with the colonial one—impatience that was bound to emerge from the utopian expectations in the run-up to independence and Partition.

Leftist circles were especially disaffected. Within six months after independence, both Communists and Socialists severed their relations with the Congress. The CPI declared, in February 1948, that independence was false, since the Congress government was a bourgeois rule controlled by Anglo-American and Indian capital.[22] Almost simultaneously, the Congress Socialist Party, which was founded as a group within the Congress in 1934, seceded on similar grounds.[23] As a result, Congress stalwarts who were long associated with the nationalist struggle and who were pivotal to the Quit India Movement were now located outside, and in opposition to, the new government.

Large parts of the novel appear to represent this "false independence" claim, most explicitly through the long, elaborate ideological debates among characters voicing Socialists' and Communists' criticism of the continuity from the colonial to the postcolonial regime. Take, for instance, this typical conversation between Tara and her friends:

> Mathur argued excitedly— "… What revolution was there? Where? Where are Gandhiji's ideals? … The same old ICS men continue to run governance. These people have not learned to serve but to rule. Their habit is not democracy but bureaucracy …."
>
> Tara responded, "Well, the change has not been so radical, but … the administrators can govern only according to the policy of those who rule, and those who set the policy have no doubt changed. The foreign [*videshi*] rule was replaced by self-rule [*swadeshi*], and this in itself is a major change."
>
> Marcy expressed her indignation— "What change is it? The situation has become worse. The capitalists have become more powerful … Now even the right to strike has been snatched from the poor laborers. Control [over prices] was removed so the capitalists could make more profits and give more to the Congress."[24]

This and similar discussions in the novel depict postcolonial society and polity as beset by stagnation rather than revolution, as the sociopolitical ills of the colonial period continue, even multiply, in everyday life.

Another means by which the novel flags the problem of continuity is through characterization. An overall erosion of pre-independence idealism is epitomized in the life trajectory of Puri and his political mentor Sood. In pre-Partition Lahore, Puri is a self-sacrificing nationalist with a liberal mind-set. After independence, Puri's less honorable aspects come to the fore, and he is increasingly compromised. He gets involved in a romantic liaison with Urmila, a refugee in a vulnerable position. When Kanak locates Puri, he deserts Urmila, even though she has just confided to him that she is carrying their child. He becomes estranged from Kanak soon after their marriage and repeatedly humiliates her after sexual intercourse. His concern

with the family's honor and reputation becomes the guiding principle in his stance on family affairs, constraining women's choices. Thus, he betrays all three women in his life—sister, wife, and lover. This is all the more important since for progressive literature the private sphere of family life, gender roles, and sexuality is integral to a just and free polity.

And truly, Puri's decisions in private matters are mirrored in his professional life. He stops writing and reading literature. His weekly magazine loses its critical vigor and ideological integrity, toeing the line of Sood's policy. This becomes evident when we compare Puri's reactions in two parallel situations, one before and one after independence. In the early 1950s, Kanak writes an editorial against the conservative stance of the local Congress toward refugee rehabilitation. Sood is furious at what he considers a shameless attack on him by the very organ that was supposed to represent him. He threatens to close down the printing press and the weekly. Puri swallows his pride, as he feels he has too much to lose. The scene explicitly mentions, and contrasts with, Puri's principled decision in pre-Partition Lahore to resist the pressure of the editor and resign in protest, even though he is truly poor at that time.[25]

As Sood becomes the most powerful figure in the Punjab Congress, Puri is incorporated into the party as well. The two friends' betrayal of their ideals is manifested in their policy of refugee rehabilitation, allocating Muslim evacuee land to rich refugees while forcibly removing the poorer refugees who were landless tenants in pre-Partition Punjab, thus preserving the inequalities of the late-colonial socioeconomic order.

Notably, both Sood and Puri were ideologically motivated political sufferers during the colonial period, and both belong to the Socialist wing of the Congress party. It is through them that the novel narrativizes the deterioration of Congress Socialists. This becomes all the more evident if we consider the intertextual relationship between *Desh ka Bhavishya* and Yashpal's 1943 novel *Deshdrohi*, whose plot takes place during the Second World War and reflects the idealism of the pre-independence days. It is as if the author intentionally traces the trajectory of the characters of *Deshdrohi* in the postindependence period. Vishwanath Sood is modeled after the character Shivnath of the earlier novel. Not only are the two names similar in sound and meaning, but they also share biographical contours—a lower-middle-class background, law studies, and imprisonment under colonial rule for their nationalist activities. In *Deshdrohi*, Shivnath leads the socialist faction of the Delhi Congress and initiates labor strikes. His radical politics is contrasted with the Gandhian Congress leader, who believes in class conciliation. Published seventeen years later, *Desh ka Bhavishya* follows the story of the Congress Socialists through the strikingly similar character of Vishwanath Sood. It is noteworthy that both Sood and Puri are not particularly corrupt as compared with other characters we encounter in the novel. If they are not beset by greed, then what compromises their politics? What happens to them along the way? The text's answer to this question is a key to its understanding of the compromises of the postcolonial moment more broadly. A significant part of the answer lies in the Congress machinery.

The Congress machinery

Referring to the Socialist branch that dominated the Delhi Congress after 1947, political scientist Yogesh Puri notes, "This was the emerging character of the Congress all over the country in the post-Independence era, and the DPCC under Brahm Prakash fit smugly into this mould. His leadership dealt deftly with distribution of loaves and fishes of office and managed the electoral machine of the Congress."[26] The novel uses a slow pace and detailed narration to demonstrate the gradual erosion of Sood and Puri's idealism in the nitty-gritty of everyday political life. As the story unfolds, political power becomes a goal in itself, overcoming ideological considerations. Sood develops electioneering machinery based on an ever-expanding patronage network, which makes a fortune for his corrupt supporters. He becomes increasingly intolerant of dissenting views and surrounds himself with yes-men and sycophants. As Puri laments in a rare moment of honesty, "Sood-ji has become totally mechanical. All he thinks about is the Congress Working Committee, the makeup of the cabinet, and the future elections. Ideology has no relevance for him. He demands support on every issue."[27] Thus, the Congress machinery perpetuates corruption, poverty, and state suppression, the central ailments singled out in the novel.

Corruption

> *Not only did the deception, inflation, and nepotism of the foreign rule period not come to an end, but in the first months of Congress rule, they expanded lavishly.*[28]

The novel addresses the problem of corruption meticulously, almost anatomically, describing various levels of corruption through concrete instances that are interwoven into daily life. At the heart of the system of corruption is the Congress government, positioned at the intersection of various liaisons of give-and-take, all feeding the electioneering machinery. The Congress politicians' dependence on big business for contributions to their elections repeatedly compromises their policies. Puri and Sood's conservative stance on land redistribution and cooperative farming is an early example. Sood also opposes the second five-year plan, which would nationalize industry, as it would drive away big business contributions to the Congress just before the second election.

The connection between the Congress and big business is likewise demonstrated in the Agarwala home in New Delhi, where Tara is employed as governess of the spoiled children. Mr. Agarwala contributes thousands of rupees to the Congress and is closely associated with Congress members. He finances the All India Congress Committee session that takes place in Delhi just before Gandhi's last fast in January 1948, and throws a reception on this occasion. We incidentally learn that he has a vested interest in the outcome of the session, since the question of price control is going to be discussed there, as his idealist son Narottam comments to Tara, "Daddy is very

concerned. There is a shortage of sugar in the bazaar and daddy has amassed seven lakh worth of sugar."[29] At the backdrop of the conversation between Narottam and Tara is a long queue of refugees in Khari Baoli bazaar, waiting for sugar.

The nexus extends to the bureaucracy—the top Indian Administrative Service (IAS) personnel at the Central Secretariat who work closely with the ministers. Various scenes in the novel show the close association between the Agarwalas, the Congress members, and the secretaries of Home, Health, and Public Works. They socialize on a regular basis at the club and at the Agarwalas' residence, where the businessman and his wife ply them with expensive drinks and dinners. They discuss the burning issues of the day in a Hinglish register that consists of more English than Hindi. The picture that arises is of an elite network that controls the top levels of politics, bureaucracy, and business, and whose privileged, westernized lifestyle is far removed from the constraints faced by the masses.

The link between businessmen and bureaucrats extends down the line to all levels of governance. When Tara visits an expensive restaurant on an exceptional occasion, she is shocked that a family meal costs as much as a government clerk's monthly salary. She sees a coworker from the Ministry of Industry and wonders how he can afford the meal. Narottam explains that such dinners are paid by businessmen in order to get a permit or a licence. They regard such expenses as part of their business.[30]

Food—its scarcity and prices—appears time and again in the novel. We learn that there are price controls over wheat, yet shop owners who get wheat from the government sell it on the black market instead. Here again, corruption is interlinked with the electioneering machinery—specifically, the pressure Sood puts on the control shop owners to donate to the Congress's 1957 elections. They make up their losses by deceiving the government and the public.[31]

The system of corruption, from the top levels of government down to the lowest levels of the bureaucracy, makes itself visible everywhere in the novel. In the hospitals, Congress members get appointments for the simplest cold when the truly sick cannot get care.[32] A refugee who owns a truck business must bribe the police so they will not delay his trucks on false pretexts.[33] Publishers bribe the textbook selection committee, complains one of the characters; as a result, second graders have more books than he had for his matriculation exams. "How can poor families afford this expenditure? … Is this the way to expand education or curb it?"[34] The cumulative effect of these and numerous other instances is to render corruption an ambient force shaping everyday life.

Khadi

The all-pervasiveness of corruption is conveyed through the symbol of *khadi*, or *khaddar*. This handspun and handwoven cotton was central to the Gandhian emphasis on *swadeshi* (self-sufficiency) as a core element of *swaraj* (self-rule)—not merely political, but social and moral independence.[35] Dipesh Chakrabarty notes that *khadi*, the attire of Indian politicians, was transformed from a symbol of purity to one of corruption.[36] *Desh ka Bhavishya* demonstrates how quickly after independence this

transformation took place. The homespun is woven minutely into the plot to become, ironically, a symbol of decay and hypocrisy. For example, while the All India Congress Committee session takes place in Delhi in 1948, the Agarwalas host a large reception. Mrs. Agarwala sends Tara and Narottam to buy tablecloths, towels, and sheets with a pure *khaddar* stamp. Mrs. Agarwala, Narottam comments, insists on pure *khaddar* only to impress the Congress leaders. He refers to a precedent from the not-so-distant past:

> Do you know what mummy used to do during the war? … Mummy used to go to a knitting club … They used to hand-knit and send sweaters, socks, etc., to the soldiers on the war front, thereby expressing their affection and respect for the soldiers, or if you will, their loyalty to the English. … Now it's the turn of pure *khaddar*.[37]

Khaddar is thus stripped of its profound association with *swadeshi* and is used cynically by those eager to please the postcolonial ruling class, just as they did the colonial rulers. Mrs. Agarwala wears *khaddar* saris when she visits Gandhi's prayer meetings or takes part in refugee rehabilitation activities, but is quick to take it off upon returning. On one occasion Mrs. Agarwala returns home in the evening and learns that her husband has invited top secretaries for dinner to discuss the political situation. Time is short and there is a lot to prepare—meat kebabs and chicken dishes must be brought in from the restaurant, and whiskey and wine glasses must be polished. An agitated Mrs. Agarwala snaps at Tara and adds, "I will just wash my face and change this damned *khaddar* sari. It is piercing my waist like a rope."[38] When she is back, she wears a chiffon sari and fresh makeup. Together with the meat and alcoholic beverages served at dinner, this change of clothes conveys the extent to which Gandhi's ideals have become hollow—a message that is magnified by the fact that this dinner takes place just after Gandhi's prayer meetings and fast.

Similarly, it is when Puri exchanges his shirt and pants for a *khaddar* kurta and pajama that his transformation from writer to politician is complete. Indeed, even more than the explicit discussions, the many casual references to *khaddar* convey its routinization and banalization after independence. *Khaddar* becomes the uniform of the Congress politicians and the way to prove loyalty, as in the case of a Muslim during the September riots in Delhi or of characters seeking government-distributed jobs or permits. It is a constant reminder of the corruption that shapes people's everyday experiences.

Suppression of dissent

> *It is the same law and the same rule of police. Not only does detention without trial continue, but under the Defense of India Act … police have become totally unbridled. If the High Court releases people, the police arrest them again. This is shameful.*[39]

Like corruption, the dynamics of suppressing dissent are demonstrated in almost anatomical precision in the novel, and they are traced to both the colonial legacy and

the Congress machinery. The more subtle form of suppression is grounded in the Congress government's allocation of resources; those associated with the Communist Party are simply left out. This is evident, first and foremost, in the allocation of government jobs. Thus, when Tara's appointment to the rehabilitation ministry is finalized, she is asked to declare that she is not a member of any political party and has no association with, or sympathy for, either the RSS or the Communists. Later her name comes up in Criminal Investigation Department (CID) reports. Tara's flatmate is a Communist, and her Communist fiancé was recently released from prison. Their house has become a meeting place of the comrades, buzzing with political debates and, we learn, constantly shadowed by the CID. "Everyone knew that Rajaji and Sardar Patel established the communists as 'enemy number one.' The government deemed those officers who had contact with or sympathy toward the communists as untrustworthy."[40] A confidential inquiry about Tara has been requested, and her boss advises her to find another home as soon as possible. Tara resents the double standard: Sympathy toward the Congress is not considered affiliation with a political party but rather an expression of loyalty. Further, IAS men are shown to be subservient to the political leadership, foreshadowing the argument made recently by historians who discuss the purging of opposition parties from the services. The latter conclude that the seeming politicization of the services in the 1980s may have been simply "due to the fact that parties that had long been excluded from power started to exert the same sort of influence over the services that the Congress had exercised for three decades."[41]

Tara's friend Mathur, who was imprisoned for three years for anticolonial activities, is drawn to the IAS for patriotic reasons but, although he passes the exam in the first division, his appointment is blocked because CID reports associate him with the Communists. Mathur laments that "the police and bureaucracy who preserve the legacy of colonial rule produce reports, based on which the old revolutionaries are deemed unfit for government service."[42] Mathur attends here to the institutional and discursive continuity that marked postcolonial surveillance. The Indian state suppressed opposition parties through the coercive means left behind by the colonial regime.[43] Progressive writers who were aligned with Socialists and Communists often personally experienced this continued suppression of dissent.[44] Yashpal himself, who served six years in prison under the British, was arrested in 1949 during a UP government roundup of all Communists, although he was not a member of the CPI.[45]

Surveillance takes a darker form when it interlinks with refugee rehabilitation and targets people less privileged than Mathur. An example is Daulatram Azad, one of the more touching characters in the novel. A Communist Punjabi refugee, Azad experiences a seamless continuity from the colonial to the postcolonial period, as he is imprisoned during the colonial period and again after independence. His imprisonment under the Congress government proves far worse, in fact, as he is beaten harshly and confined in a dungeon. Upon his release, the CID shadows him everywhere, making it impossible for him to find a job. Because his brother was murdered during the riots and his brother's wife disappeared, Azad must support his old mother and two nephews, who are forced to stay out of school and work for meager earnings in exploitative conditions. Kanak convinces Puri to help Azad to

get a quota of tin sheets. But Sood takes Azad off the list and replaces him—a true political sufferer during the nationalist struggle—with a rich Sindhi refugee who can elicit support for Sood in the upcoming elections among the Sindhi community.[46] Azad represents the many Communist refugees who have a hard time rehabilitating after Partition, since they do not have government assistance.

Disenchantment with the CPI

Azad's story articulates the complex politics of the novel. While the text is critical of the government's harassment of an honest freedom fighter and poor refugee, it does not spare the CPI, which also fails to care for its loyal comrade. During the Second World War, Azad and other comrades were imprisoned until the CPI changed its policy toward the war and they were released. The same dynamic repeats after independence, when the Communists declare a revolution. Azad is again imprisoned and, along with other comrades, he goes on a hunger strike, is forcibly fed through the nose, and suffers violence from the wardens, only to learn through the newspapers that the party has changed its course again and backtracked from its futile attempt at revolution. When he is finally released, the severely weakened party cannot support him and his impoverished family. The account, which is based on real historical events, articulates a prevalent dissatisfaction of many leftists, in and outside the party, with the CPI policy as a blunder.[47]

The CPI's vacillation bears heavily on poor comrades like Azad and is a target of Tara's criticism. She claims that the party's constant zigzagging harms the comrades and confuses the masses. Some of her friends ascribe the CPI's backpedaling to dictates from Moscow, thereby echoing the prevalent charge that the party's policy was determined by external considerations instead of national circumstances and interests.[48]

Tara's—and thus the novel's—position vis-à-vis the Communists is sober, especially when compared with Yashpal's previous novels, which treat the CPI as the natural successor of the HSRA and the harbinger of revolution. *Desh ka Bhavishya*, on the other hand, takes a sympathetic yet critical stance. Tara is fond of her Communist friends, but she often tires of their endless and repetitive arguments about the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which lead nowhere and remain incomprehensible to the masses. The narration conveys this inaccessibility through language. Ostensibly in Hindi, a Communist friend's spiel sounds like this:

> bourgeois democratic revolution ka hamare desh mein prashan hi nahin hai. Yahan political power feudal ya zamindari class mei nahin hai, capitalist ke hath mei hai. hamara task landless peasantry aur working class ko lekar political power par kabza karna hai.[49]

This is one of many instances where the novel uses language to convey the message that many Communists are out of touch with the masses on whose behalf they wish to embark on a revolution. One can map out the social world of the novel by the

degree to which the speakers use English: from the working classes, who either do not use it all or totally distort the English words used by their employers, to the lower middle classes, who drop English words here and there, to the elites, who speak long sentences in English, requiring the narrator to translate whole sentences into Hindi in parentheses for the reader's benefit. Among this last group, the most prominent are two ostensible opposites: top bureaucrats and Communists. As Puri's mother comments when her son and daughter-in-law speak in English so she won't understand, "the damned English may have gone, but they left their damned English behind."[50] English in the novel marks the continuity of colonial hierarchies in the postcolonial world, and as the Communists speak the language of the old power, their call for a revolution remains a limited one.

Moreover, the novel also takes part in contemporary debates about progressive literature, criticizing the party's dogmatic line and its stifling impact on culture.[51] In one scene, when Narottam confesses that he did not like a Communist friend's most recent collection of short stories, the comrade snaps at him in Hinglish, "Tumhain to bourgeois-trash aur sex chahiye. Progressive literature kyon accha lagega? This is your class nature."[52] The novel thus comments on the growing puritanism of progressive writers following independence, a trend evident in both India and Pakistan.[53] When Narottam emphasizes that he liked the author's previous anthology, the comrade replies that the previous one was not purely progressive, but (in pure English) "Now I have clinched the issues from working class point of view."[54]

While the register spoken by the comrade renders his revolutionary aspirations ironic and even comical, the scene ends on a sinister note. The comrade departs in anger, telling Narottam, "Those who are not with us are against us. At the time of the revolution, what happened in France, Russia and Eastern Europe will happen here as well." Narottam asks whether he will show mercy toward him for the sake of their old friendship, and the comrade replies, "I cannot promise that."[55] This is a comment on the inherently intolerant nature of Communist language and the cruel form it might have taken in India had the party succeeded. Written at the close of the 1950s, *Jhootha Sach* conveys the author's disillusionment with the CPI.

There are various historiographical explanations for the failures of Communists in postindependence, but as Bandyopadhyay observes, at its bottom was their inability to grapple with the communal riots and Partition politics that started in 1946.[56] The first time this weakness appears in *Jhootha Sach* is in the first volume, when Puri criticizes the CPI's support for the Pakistan movement—an assessment that proves judicious in light of the subsequent Partition tragedy.[57] The novel also portrays the CPI's failure to grapple with Partition after 1947. For while the CPI took the line that the nationalist leaders were structurally beholden to imperialism and capitalism and thus bound to reproduce the repression and inequality of the colonial bourgeois state, the novel shows that class is not a sufficient explanation. Any historicization of the postcolonial moment, it demonstrates, must account for Partition—the unfathomable brutalities, the refugee exodus, the arduous work of rehabilitation, the endless queues for rationed commodities, the petty politics of distribution in the refugee camps, the struggles over evacuee property, the corruption, and the sexual exploitation of refugee women. Thus, the novel's detailed and epic form makes the case that the ideals

of independence were betrayed through specific events and could not be reduced to Marxist theory.[58]

Puri's idealism erodes as preexisting patriarchal values and his own personality structure encounter the post-1947 Congress machinery, but the novel also shows that his flaws surface under the pressures of Partition. And Puri indicates a more general dynamic—that the refugee crisis was cataclysmic not only for the refugees themselves but also for the newly forming state. The large number of refugees exacerbated the scarcity of resources—be it rations, jobs, housing, land, permits, or small-scale means of production—and this shortage, in turn, magnified pressures on the government's system of distributing such resources, and hence the problems of corruption and nepotism.[59] There are countless examples throughout the novel of corruption related to refugee rehabilitation—truly needy refugees being bypassed in favor of those who have Congress connections and those who are wealthy enough to bribe officials.

Conclusion: Yashpal's historical understanding of the postcolonial moment

The narrative comes to a close on an optimistic note with the convergence of several victories in both "home" and the "world": Kanak divorces Puri to marry her beloved, the reactionary court case against Tara and Dr. Nath's marriage is defeated, and Sood and Puri lose the 1957 elections. The novel affirms its faith in the Nehruvian state, whose promise lies in socialist centralized planning and the democratic process. Potential for social reform lies in the close circle surrounding Tara, especially her husband Dr. Nath, the brilliant economist who embodies holistic progressivism—in matters of both gender relations and economics. His love for Tara is not compromised by the revelation of her abduction during the riots and the venereal disease she thereby contracted. Significantly, he is among the architects of the second five-year plan, in which the novel unequivocally puts its faith. As the novel draws to a close, the Communists surrounding Tara dispense with their uncompromising opposition to the government and huddle around Dr. Nath, excited about the socialist potential of the second plan. The ideology of the novel thus articulates the pro-Congress line that became more vocal in the Indian left by the late 1950s, when many ideologues supported and joined the planning team headed by P.C. Mahalanobis, and the CPI tempered its opposition to Nehru. This followed Khrushchev's de-Stalinization speech and the new rapport Nehru and Soviet leaders had established.[60] The more conciliatory approach found expression among progressive writers,[61] including Yashpal, who noted, "The essential quality of progressive thought and literature is awareness of ever-changing conditions and readiness to reconsider and revise theories on the basis of knowledge gained through social experience. Progressive thought and literature must always remain vigilant against orthodoxy and dogmatism."[62]

The novel concludes with Dr. Nath's statement: "now you should have faith. The people are not lifeless. The people do not remain mute forever. The future of the country is not in the fists of leaders and ministers, but in the hands of the people."[63] Dalmia reads this closing as too neat and unreliable, stemming from

Yashpal's impulse to convey a clear moral message.[64] I agree that the optimistic note is somewhat discordant with the body of the novel and with the scathing comments about Nehru that come just a few pages earlier. I suggest that this incongruence marks the ambivalence of the text and of progressive writers and left-wing ideologues more generally at this moment. The tension is already set up by the title: Independence may be a lie, as the CPI claimed, but not a complete lie. This tension extends to the novel's formal aspects: Its realist form conveys a belief in the role and ability of literature to represent reality and, as the epigraph states, to unearth and reveal hidden truths to a public deceived by lies. Yet the text acknowledges that this truth is also false, hinting that such an exercise is doomed to remain incomplete.

This novel thus captures a sober yet optimistic moment, before a more profound disillusionment set in during the 1960s following the defeat to China, the failure of the third five-year plan, and Nehru's decline and death. In *Jhootha Sach*, disillusionment is not despair. In the subsequent decade, however, the theme of disenchantment would come to dominate Hindi literature more unequivocally.[65]

Notes

1 Epigraph to Yashpal, *Jhootha Sach Volume One: Vatan Aur Desh* (Allahabad Lokbharati Prakashan, 2007 [1958]); *Jhootha Sach Volume Two: Desh Ka Bhavishya* (Allahabad Lokbharati Prakashan, 2007 [1960]). This and all following quotations in the article are my translation from Hindi. I use my own translation for reasons of linguistic detail, but readers may consult the existing English translation of the novel: *This Is Not That Dawn: Jhootha Sach*, translated by Anand (New Delhi: Penguin, 2010).

2 For selected publications on the progressive movement, see Carlo Coppola, ed. *Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature* (East Lansing: Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University 1974); Priyamvada Gopal, *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Talat Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism: The Progressive Writers' Movement in South Asia, 1932–56* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009).

3 For debates among progressive writers, see Snehal Shingavi, "When the Pen Was a Sword: The Radical Career of the Progressive Novel in India," in *A History of the Indian Novel in English*, ed. Ulka Anjaria (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015). For the divergent interpretations of progressive literature as either radical or complicit in the hegemony of the nation-state, see Ulka Anjaria, *Realism in the Twentieth-Century Indian Novel: Colonial Difference and Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7, 8.

4 Yashpal, *Deshdrohi* (Allahabad: Lokbharati Prakashan, 1984 [1943]). For a thoughtful analysis of these early novels, see Nikhil Govind, *Between Love and Freedom: The Revolutionary in the Hindi Novel* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2014).

5 Namwar Singh, "Reformulating the Questions," in *Early Novels in India*, ed. Meenakshi Mukherjee (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2002), 5.

6 Preetha Laxmi Mani, "Gender, Genre, and the Idea of Indian Literature: The Short Story in Hindi and Tamil, 1950–1970" (unpublished dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2012).

7 Govind, *Between Love and Freedom*.
8 Pam Morris, *Realism* (London: Routledge, 2003), 4.
9 Vasudha Dalmia, *Fiction as History: The Novel and the City in Modern North India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black 2017), 204–05.
10 Ibid., 217.
11 This observation is often ascribed to Benedict Anderson. See ibid., 36.
12 For an elaboration of this problematic in the context of Indian literature, see Meenakshi Mukherjee, *Realism and Reality* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985).
13 Morris, *Realism*.
14 Anjaria, *Realism in the Twentieth-Century Indian Novel*.
15 Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders & Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998); Veena Das and Renu Addlakha, "Disability and Domestic Citizenship: Voice, Gender, and the Making of the Subject." *Public Culture* 13, no. 3 (2001): 511–31.
16 The story was told to Yashpal's son and translator of the novel to English: Anand, "Translator's Note," in *This Is Not That Dawn: Jhootha Sach*.
17 Obviously this chapter cannot do justice to the vast literature about Partition. The most comprehensive collection of translated short stories is: Alok Bhalla, ed. *Stories about the Partition of India*, 4 vols. (New Delhi: Manohar, 2012 [1994]).
18 *Jhootha Sach*'s insights have only recently begun to be developed by scholars who show that refugee rehabilitation was inflected by considerations of class, caste, and gender, and preserved old hierarchies: Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007); Ian Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and Its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar, 1947–1957* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006).
19 For example, Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
20 Indivar Kamtekar, "The Fables of Nationalism." *India International Centre Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (1999): 50.
21 William Gould, Sherman C. Taylor, and Sarah Ansari, "The Flux of the Matter: Loyalty, Corruption and the 'Everyday State' in the Post-Partition Government Services of India and Pakistan." *Past and Present* 219 (May 2013): 238.
22 Javeed Alam, "State and the Making of Communist Politics in India, 1947–57." *Economic & Political Weekly* 26, no. 45 (1991). For the articulation of the false independence claim in the 5th AIPWA in May 1949, see Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism*, 157.
23 Shalini Sharma, "'Yeh Azaadi Jhoothi Hai!': The Shaping of the Opposition in the First Year of the Congress Raj." *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 5 (2014): 1379–81.
24 Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 301.
25 Ibid., 421.
26 Yogesh Puri, *Party Politics in the Nehru Era: A Study of Congress in Delhi* (New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1993), 60.
27 Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 420–21.
28 Ibid., 262.
29 Ibid., 143.
30 Ibid., 442.

31 Ibid., 515.
32 Ibid., 255.
33 Ibid., 490.
34 Ibid., 324.
35 For a relatively recent study of *khadi*, see Lisa Trivedi, *Clothing Gandhi's Nation: Homespun and Modern India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).
36 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Khadi and the Political Man," in *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
37 Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 142.
38 Ibid., 156.
39 Ibid., 301.
40 Ibid., 335.
41 Gould et al., "The Flux of the Matter," 258.
42 Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 301.
43 Sharma, "Yeh Azaadi Jhoothi Hai!"
44 Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism*, 159–60.
45 Corrine Friend, "Yashpal: Fighter for Freedom—Writer for Justice: An Overview of Two Careers." *Journal of South Asian Literature* 13, no. 1/4 (1977–78): 88.
46 Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 319–23.
47 For the historical background, see M. B. Rao, "Introduction," in *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, ed. M. B. Rao (New Delhi: People's Publishing Press, 1960), x–xi.
48 Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 332–33.
49 "There is no scope for a bourgeois democratic revolution in our country. Here political power is not in the hands of the feudal or landlord class, but in the hands of the capitalists. Our task is to gather the landless peasantry and working class and capture political power." Ibid., 245.
50 Ibid., 310.
51 For a recollection of this internal change within the CPI, see Raj Thapar, *All These Years: A Memoir* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1991). For its influence on progressive literature, see Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism*, 160–61.
52 "You want bourgeoisie trash and sex. Why should you like progressive literature? This is your class nature." Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 331.
53 Yashpal himself was attacked by critics who claimed that his literature was not progressive enough. *Jhootha Sach* was itself criticized for Tara's somewhat fetishistic desire for her car. See Daisy Rockwell, *Upendranath Ashk: A Critical Biography* (New Delhi: Katha, 2004), 61. For the parallel puritanical bent of progressive discourse in Pakistan, see Kamran Asdar Ali, "Progressives and 'Perverts': Partition Stories and Pakistan's Future." *Social Text* 29, no. 3 (2011): 108.
54 Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 332.
55 Ibid.
56 Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition and After: A History of Modern India* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2015 [2004]), 486.
57 Yashpal, *Vatan Aur Desh*, 36, 65–66. For the "Adhikari Thesis" in support of the Muslim League demand for Pakistan, see Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, "Introduction," in *Decolonisation and the Politics of Transition in South Asia*, ed. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2016), 13.
58 I thank Gyan Prakash for this insight.

59 For a parallel process in Pakistan, see Ilyas Chattha, "Competition for Resources: Partition's Evacuee Property and the Sustenance of Corruption in Pakistan," *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 5 (2012).
60 Alam, "State and the Making of Communist Politics in India, 1947–57," 2579; Benjamin Zachariah, *Nehru* (London: Routledge, 2004), 192.
61 Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism*, 161–62. For a critique of this trend as the "infiltration of bourgeois ideas into cultural work," see Sudhi Pradhan, ed. *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: Chronicles and Documents*, Vol. 2: 1947–1958 (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1985), 11.
62 Yashpal's address to the PWA in 1958, quoted in Friend, "Yashpal: Fighter for Freedom—Writer for Justice," 88.
63 Yashpal, *Desh Ka Bhavishya*, 540.
64 Dalmia, *Fiction as History*, 250.
65 For analysis of the theme of alienation in the Nayi Kahani (Short Story) movement of the 1960s, see Gordon C. Roadarmel, "The Theme of Alienation in the Modern Hindi Short Story" (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1969).

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The Enemy Within: Communism and the New Pakistani State

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In a story called "Sorry," as in the English word, and consisting of a few sentences, the Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto (1912–1955) depicts an act of stabbing during British India's Partition violence. The knife continues beyond the abdomen and cuts open the trousers. The killer laments and just says, "uh oh, I committed a *mishtake* [*sic*]", leading the reader to believe that as the trousers fall down the "identity" of the victim is revealed in some capacity.[1] There can be multiple ways to interpret this story, but one reading of Manto's short stories written after the carnage of 1947 during the early years of Pakistan's existence may represent his already-developing ambivalence and uncertainty about the consolidation of a unitary identity in the Pakistani state. Hence the short story, "Sorry" may not only deal with the similarity and distance between self and the other, Hindu or Muslim, but also be about how in the new country people—reflecting perhaps Manto's own uncertainty—were still unsure about who they were or had become. What lay under the trousers after the violent act of ripping them open can of course be read in terms of religious or for that matter sexual/gender identity. But the "exposure" or the "unveiling" of what lies underneath may metaphorically also be understood as the emergent ambiguous nature of national identity (who are we, what have we become) itself in a post-catastrophic moment, the early years of Pakistan's history.

My reading of Manto's story follows the historian David Gilmartin's critique of the unitary claims of Muslim nationalism. As postindependence Pakistani state emphasized national unity on the basis of a single national language (Urdu) and a unified religious identity (Islam), these remained in conflict with the cultural and linguistic diversity of the people who had become part of this new space.[2] This contradiction between local and transcendent (the all-encompassing) identities of Muslimness was partly responsible for the mistrust shown by the postindependence Pakistani state, wrapped as it was in the ideology of Muslim Nationalism, toward the diverse aspirations of its own people and which led to the imposition of a metanarrative of an undivided nation on the populace (Bengal, Baluchistan). Manto,

as a sensitive writer who had witnessed the carnage of 1947, perhaps foresaw the cultural nonstability of the new country.

Within this context, despite the ideological platform of Muslim nationalism used by the Pakistan state, the shape of its future culture, polity, and forms of governance initially remained an open question. Among the discussions that were produced on the future of the new state, one major vision was that of the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) and its small number of cadres. In comparison with what became India, the lands that became Pakistan were not as industrialized and did not have a large presence of Muslims who were members of Communist Party of India (CPI); Partition led to the move of most existing Communist Party members who were either Sikh or Hindu to India. The CPP leadership, generally arrived from India, was not familiar with the cultural and political landscape of the country and most belonged to the North Indian *ashraf*, a highly educated and self-conscious Muslim elite, personally steeped in the comportment, culture, and aesthetics of North Indian *adab* in its many connotations and meanings—as literary genre, concept, and personal quality.[3] Yet these very same people were also dedicated to establishing a future socialist society that was committed to democratic values, distribution of wealth, and an end to exploitation of the oppressed. They brought with them a vision of an anticipatory politics that argued for a future that would be more egalitarian and more liberating than that being offered by the dominant political forces. These men (and they were mostly men) had grown up influenced by the lessons of the Soviet October Revolution of 1917 and had similar utopian visions of delivering happiness to humankind in South Asia (Pakistan) by transforming nature to insure material needs and by struggling against individualism and exploitation to guarantee social justice.[4] These dreams and ideals, along with a commitment to the anticolonial struggle, were at the core of the communist movement in British India that they brought with them to the newly formed state after 1947.

The CPP started work in an international climate in which the Pakistani state became enmeshed in Cold War politics soon after its independence. British and US intelligence agencies worked closely with the higher echelons of the Pakistani state to curtail the "communist threat." In the 1950s, this relationship intensified and Pakistan's political and military leadership took the country into US-sponsored anticommunist treaties such as SEATO and CENTO,[5] leading to severe repression of the Communist Party and its eventual banning in 1954. This chapter will follow CPP's early history, especially its labor politics to show the various ways the communist-supported labor struggles came under attack in a Pakistan. It also reminds us of the challenge of how to represent the multiple layers of Pakistan's history to bring it out of the Muslim nationalism, gender discrimination, security studies/Islamic threat paradigms—important as they may be—that constantly inform the scholarship on Pakistan. Addressing this challenge, this paper focuses on a moment of communist and working-class history in the 1950s. This path, in addition to documenting this period, enables me to reframe Pakistan's social and cultural history by presenting other possible imaginations for Pakistan's future that were available during the formative years of its existence.

The early years

The sheer number of refugees that came from India following Partition gave rise to a crisis of governance in the first years of Pakistan's existence. The Partition riots were the worst in Punjab; it is estimated about 1.25 million people crossed the border, moving in opposite directions by early September, and millions more were on the move. The resettlement of these refugees and the entire enterprise of distribution of evacuee property was a task that overwhelmed the Punjab and Central governments.[6] There were cholera outbreaks in the refugee camps leading to loss of lives, and, in some cases, there were violent clashes between the police and refugees demonstrating for adequate rations and allotment of agricultural land. The Pakistani authorities were also worried about the loss of agricultural hands in West Punjab, the country's granary, for the *Kharif* (autumn) crop. This problem could be exacerbated if the *Rabi* crop could not be planted for the following spring and a famine could ensue.[7] In addition, situation in Karachi and Sindh with the influx of migrants from North India soon too became unmanageable. The Sindh government, as early as September 1947, when the numbers of refugees were relatively low, passed Sindh Maintenance and Public Safety Ordinance to safeguard life and property that could result from the large inflow of people into Sindh and especially Karachi from India.[8] This ongoing problem which lasted well into the 1950s created political factionalism linked to the "refugee" or *Muhajir* issue that resonates to this day in Pakistan.

Within the larger parameters of the refugee problem, even in the first year of its existence the ruling elite of Pakistan became suspicious of any challenge to its authority. Jinnah and the Muslim League had brought together a range of interests and social classes in support for the call for Pakistan. By avoiding specifics and by not putting forward any concrete economic program in its final days (although the 1946 manifestos of the Punjab and East Bengal Muslim League did address these issues), the Muslim League had succeeded in appealing to "landowners, businessmen, lawyers, socialists, intellectuals and the middle classes."[9] It had also played on the slogan "Islam is in danger" to mobilize the more religious groups, the rural masses, and of course those large landowners who were linked with religious authority as caretakers of shrines and sacred lineages. However, once Pakistan was created, the lack of clarity on any social and economic policy made governing the new state a matter of political gamesmanship where the party officials continued to manipulate colonial laws and legal procedures to stay in power.

Jinnah himself dismissed two provincial ministries, one in Sindh and the other in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), during his brief tenure of over a year in office as Governor-General of Pakistan.[10] He used extra-constitutional powers to dismiss the Congress-supported ministry in NWFP, which had legislative majority, although it had lost the referendum held in 1947 in which more than 50 percent of the population in the province had voted for Pakistan's formation. Jinnah used the extraordinary powers of Section 51(5) under the Government of India Act of 1935 to overthrow the provincial government of Dr. Khan Sahib to institute Governor's rule (Cunningham). For months following this dismissal, the newly formed Muslim

League ministry failed to gain legislative majority and had to resort to arrests and intimidation of opposition members.[11] In a graver action, Jinnah dismissed the elected Sindh Chief Minister, Ayub Khuro, who belonged to Jinnah's own party. Khuro objected to Karachi being withdrawn administratively from the province of Sindh to be named the federal capital. He was also reluctant to the resettlement. Jinnah charged Khuro with maladministration, gross misconduct, and corruption in the performance of duties using the same Section 51(5) from colonial law.[12]

Further, Jinnah during this period had consolidated for himself not only the position of the Governor-General, but also as the President of the Legislature. Disregarding the colonial tradition of Governor-Generals remaining above everyday politics and not accepting cabinet positions, Jinnah not only handpicked and appointed the entire first Cabinet, overriding the Prime Minister, but also retained two ministries for himself, that of Evacuation and Refugees (the most important ministry in terms of resource distribution; Jinnah did not trust anyone among his colleagues) and Frontier Regions. It can be claimed that Jinnah was the most able politician in the Muslim League, and given the extraordinary circumstances following the Partition of British India, this ailing leader wanted to organize things before his own passing away. Yet his creation of a political space for himself as Governor-General and his control over the Executive, the Cabinet, and the Legislature suggest his own relationship with power.[13]

Following Jinnah's death, his tradition of centralizing power was carried forward by Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, who openly advocated the supremacy of one ruling party and derided those who opposed the Muslim League as traitors and enemy agents.[14] The government continuously relied on Public Safety Acts and other new draconian measures[15] to keep a check on political opponents. Based on these provisions, Liaquat dismissed the Punjab government of Nawab of Mamdot, a province that even Jinnah had not touched during his tenure.[16]

There is no denying that the new state had enormous economic and social challenges, foremost being, as discussed above, the settling of refugees who had poured into the country, mostly destitute and without resources. There were secessionist tendencies in the NWFP politics that were being encouraged by the Afghan government and the lingering problem of Kashmir was ever present, making the security of the country vulnerable.[17] To be sure, Allen McGrath in his book on Pakistan's early governance argues that in the first few months after independence Jinnah feared that India would be successful in destroying Pakistan. India's use of force in Kashmir along with the ultimatum given to the princely state of Hyderabad (a state that was sympathetic to Pakistan) for forceful incorporation into India (which happened through "police action" in September 1948) were construed as direct threats to Pakistan's own security.[18]

The early history of Pakistan is hence littered with disagreements on a range of issues and also a fear of being destroyed by its larger neighbor,[19] but the landowners, lawyers, and the emerging mercantile elite were united in their fear of communist politics that threatened the status quo and demanded radical change.[20] In the emerging atmosphere of the Cold War, perhaps the bogey of the communist threat offered an easy target for the government to deflect from its own shortcomings in

providing the people of Pakistan political stability along with social and economic policies that would work in their favor.[21] For example, from 1949 onwards the Ministry of the Interior formed a secret subcommittee to combat communism in government services, reflecting anxieties that the lower ranks of the civil service and the army officer corps had developed irreligious or left-wing views.[22] Alongside this committee, another anticommunist committee in the cabinet had been functioning since the beginning of 1949.[23] To counter the perceived communist threats, the US Information Service and the British Information Service offered their support to the government and outlined a plan to influence Pakistan's educated youth, journalists, and professional writers[24] about the misunderstanding concerning world ideologies. The two countries planned to make books, pamphlets, and journal articles available to the Ministry of Information in Pakistan, with a scheme to assist in the translation and dissemination of this material into Urdu and Bengali.[25]

These processes were in tandem with police repression, confiscation of periodicals and pamphlets, censorship, arrests, general harassment, and state-sponsored propaganda against the communists. The state also started using Islam as a political weapon to counteract various democratic forces. Islamic doctrine was employed in the media to persuade people against the antireligious (meaning anti-Islam) and, linked to this, the communists' anti-Pakistan political stance. Public gatherings by communists were occasionally attacked and disrupted by mobs claiming Islamic tendencies or love for Pakistan.[26]

The new party and the labor movement

The focus of the government's surveillance and harassment, the CPP was formed a few months after British India separated into two countries as the CPI also divided into two constitutive parts during its second Congress in February–March 1948. The Congress decided that the Communist Party of India would confine its working to the boundaries of the Indian Union while the post-August 1947 separated territories of Pakistan would be free to form a different communist party. Syed Sajjad Zaheer was elected the General Secretary as he had opted to go to Pakistan. It was also decided that the East Bengal party would continue to be guided by the West Bengal Communist Party and retain its link to CPI; hence, it was only the West Pakistan Party that would constitute an entirely separate entity.

In 1947, Pakistan was primarily a rural country with majority of its eighty million inhabitants in both wings earning their living through agriculture. Less than 1 percent of its population was involved in wage labor which included working in factories, mines, railroad transport, and tea plantations. A third of these workers were organized into 150 trade unions with a total membership approximating 190,000. The majority was linked to the railways in West Punjab (90,000) and East Bengal (13,000). In East Bengal, a sizable number of workers were unionized in the tea plantations as well (27,000). But barring these figures the number of union members in Sindh, Baluchistan, and the NWFP were negligible. Karachi being the port city and the capital had thirty-six unions with 15,000 workers.[27]

The Pakistan Trade Union Federation (PTUF) was the most important link that the Communist Party had with the working class. By 1948–1949, the approximately 150 unions were distinctly placed in two camps. The first group of unions, PTUF, was led by leaders close to members of the Communist Party and was the continuation of the former Communist-supported All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). The other major group of unions was the Pakistan Federation of Labour (West Pakistan) and the All Pakistan Trade Union Federation (APTUF) (East Pakistan), which merged by 1949 to become the All Pakistan Federation of Labor (APFL). In Punjab, the largest union was in the railways where the PTUF had its major following under Mirza Ibrahim, a senior CPP member, who was also the Federation's President while the poet and intellectual, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, who was close to the CPP leadership, was the Vice President.[28]

Although the unionized strength of workers was very small, by early 1950 the PTUF had organized major events to put forward the anti-imperialist united front agenda of the Soviet bloc. In the polarized world of the emergent Cold War, the Pakistani Communists through their labor front were active in bringing like-minded groups of intellectuals, peasants, and workers together to demand higher wages, shorter working hours, land reforms, and the repeal of "Public Safety Acts" and also to condemn the government of Pakistan for its cooperation with the Anglo-American bloc.[29]

One such event was held from April 21 to 23, 1950, when the PTUF organized a Conference in Lahore that categorically took up these issues. The Conference resolutions showed a keen understanding of the current political situation in Pakistan, where the government, as suggested above, was leaning toward closer economic and military alliances with the United States.[30] Hence, the Conference, following CPI's hard-line, condemned the antipeople and war policy of the capitalists, landlords, and rulers of Pakistan. Echoing the general thrust of the World Peace Committee and the pro-Soviet line on nuclear disarmament in the late 1940s, the Conference called on workers and people to strive against imperialists and their allies in the Pakistani state. It set out demands that included Pakistan immediately establishing friendly relationship with Soviet Union and Communist China, supporting the Soviet Union policy of banning use of atomic weapons, and resigning from the British Commonwealth.

The resolutions further took aim at the Anglo-American monopolists who were accused of seeking another world war to keep their profits intact and to dismantle the revolutionary struggles of Soviet Russia, the New China, and the European People's Republics. This was followed by an assessment of the politics in Asian countries, where the Conference attacked the Pakistan government for supporting the Atlantic Pact and Western powers in their desire to crush the independence movements in Malaya, Burma, Siam, Indonesia, and South Korea. It estimated that a large portion of the country's budget was being spent on defense-related expenditure and not on enhancing worker's wages or providing them with better housing, free education, and quality health care.[31] All these demands were to be fulfilled by abolishing landlordism and feudalism and distributing the seized land among the tillers. The big industries were to be nationalized and foreign capital was to be taken over

by the state without any compensation. The path to this transformation was the formation of strong and fighting unions and their preparation for the final struggle, the general strike, to move forward a vigorous campaign to gain victory.[32]

The work begins

The call for a general strike was in line with the shift toward a more radical political line by the CPP, following the CPI's resolution during the Calcutta Congress in 1948. This was called Ranadive line, after the newly elected CPI General Secretary.[33] The resolution pushed for an uncompromising struggle against the newly independent Indian government. It argued, echoing the emerging Soviet thesis of the world divided into two hostile camps, that the Indian big business had come to an agreement with imperialism and the Indian national leadership was collaborating with this policy of increased imperialist domination. To meet this situation, the resolution called for a unity of workers, peasants, and progressive intellectuals to unseat the opportunist and collaborationist bourgeois national leadership. Therefore, the basic aim of the party in the forthcoming years would be to organize toiling masses to struggle for anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution so as to establish a people's democratic state led by the working class.[34] The Congress also acknowledged that the terrain in Pakistan may be more difficult due to the presence of feudalism and the weakness of the trade union and peasant movements and due to the authoritarian grip of the Muslim League; overcoming these obstacles added urgency to the party's work in Pakistan. Hence, direction was given to build mass fronts that would unite proletariats, peasants, and the urban middle classes on a democratic platform to expose the antipeople policies of the government of Pakistan and its feudal and bourgeois allies.[35] The General Secretary of CPP, Sajjad Zaheer, adopted the same line in Pakistan.[36]

Hence, the PTUF-organized conference's resolution was in keeping with Sajjad Zaheer's interpretation of CPI's new directives as he emphasized a politics of constant agitation. Rather than seek to create a broad-based trade union movement that would bring together a labor movement weakened by the departure of many non-Muslim leaders, from the very beginning the central leadership of the CPP pushed to organize the more militant workers for immediate confrontation. The workers were to be called to group meetings and their grievances heard and solutions found by the leadership of the party (the party cadres who worked among the workers). This would encourage the more militant workers to agitate in their work places and neighborhoods, helping to create wider circles for this confrontational politics, eventually leading to demonstrations and processions and the raising of extremist slogans.

In a memo from the Central Committee to the Karachi Organizing Committee, Zaheer called on forging links with all members of the discontented workers—to have secret committees in various work spaces to create an environment for spontaneous stoppages and strikes. The memo acknowledges that the government and the employers would respond harshly to such measures and workers should be ready for the consequences, either of being terminated from work or of facing the brutality of the security services. In such cases, the party, the memo argues, should

be ready to hit back, and even if demands were not met, the workers should not be demoralized. Rather, care should be taken that in such processes the workers' militancy increases so that they become more class conscious, leading them to higher levels of sustained struggle. It is clear, Zaheer states, that there should be expectations of arrests, victimization, layoffs, and people being shot at and injured. However, if the best and most advanced workers, the leadership, remains safe and continues to guide the confrontation, then this violence could only make the workers more resolute for further action while making them examples for the other marginalized classes to join in as they would see these struggles being conducted for the rights of all oppressed.[37]

This politics of confrontation would inevitably harm the day-to-day working of the trade unions. It especially affected the selling of literature and resulted in periodic arrests of the more committed cadre, leaving the offices to be run by junior colleagues. For example, in Lahore the largest concentration of labor forces in the country was within the Moghalpura Railway Workshop, a public-sector enterprise. Prior to the Partition of British India, the government of India had set up a Pay Commission to study the working conditions of the railway workers. This had come about due to a sustained pressure exerted by the railway workers under Mirza Ibrahim's leadership through strikes and stoppages. Both Congress and the Muslim League had accepted the Pay Commission's recommendation, but after independence the Muslim League did not address this issue due to its economic problems. Following this, there were major strikes in Lahore in December 1947, which led to Ibrahim's arrest. The poet and intellectual Faiz Ahmed Faiz was thrust into the position of leading the PTUF as he, as mentioned above, was the elected Vice President. Sensing further disturbances, the government's repressive machinery arrested Faiz (in April 1948), while other communist leaders connected to the labor movement—Eric Cyprian, Ferozuddin Mansoor, Dada Amir Haidar (from Rawalpindi), and Mirza Ibrahim (again)—were picked up in September 1948. Similarly, scores of workers would be arrested for selling the banned CPP paper *Naya Zamana* or under other pretexts, and dismissal from work of the rank and file CPP members and industrial workers under one law and order pretext or the other was extremely common.[38]

Karachi, as other places, also saw the loss of militant and organized cadres from the trade union movement due to Partition. However, it had a diversified labor movement that included unions among bidi workers, tram workers, railway workers, and hotel workers.[39] Soon after Partition, a union of Federal and Government Workers took shape, especially against rising inflation and the nonimplementation of the Central Government Pay Commission.[40] Most of these unions had communist influences. Being the major port in West Pakistan, the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) had the highest numbers of employed dock workers, and Mohammad Sharaf Ali, a member of the party who had migrated from India, was elected its General Secretary.[41] Due to CPP's post–Calcutta Congress position that the postindependence moment was a time of generalized insurrection to move to the next stage of social evolution, there was a constant call on cadres and workers to involve themselves in strikes, sit downs, and workplace agitation. Hence, under Sharaf Ali's general leadership communist unions in Karachi also brought out large processions in support of the railway workers and their demands to implement the Pay Commission awards. To move the workers

forward toward a more militant struggle, the CPP pushed a politics of agitation on all fronts. So, if the Port Trust workers struck on one day, the postal workers would bring out a procession the next week, or the Public Works Department (PWD) workers would hold a hunger strike a few days later. The government was ever-more vigilant in Karachi, the capital, against any kind of threat to the law and order situation and responded with widespread further arrests.[42] This pattern of strikes and retaliation remained a constant feature of labor politics in the ensuing years.

The other labor front

At its independence in 1947 the country inherited only 9 percent of the total industrial establishment of British India. The lack of industrial capital was mirrored by the weakness of organized industrial labor and the peasantry.[43] The state promoted industrialization by providing soft loans and tax holidays and by setting up the Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation in the late 1940s with assistance from the World Bank and foreign capital. Due to early lack of response from the local merchant capital, the state also formed the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) through which it initiated industrial projects that were then transferred to the private sector at bargain prices.[44] The first phase of private industrialization occurred after the Korean War, when the profits gained by Pakistani traders were channeled into industrial investment.[45]

For example, special areas were developed in Karachi, the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) and Landhi-Korangi industrial area, and land was sold to construct factories at extremely generous rates. With the state's role in setting up industries, the bureaucracy became intrinsically involved in the control of this industrial expansion. For example, between 1947 and 1955, 774 new industries were established in Karachi representing almost 50 percent of all industrialization in Pakistan.[46] State agencies directly financed the industrial concerns or participated in legislating laws to favor this growth. On the one hand, the collusion of the bureaucracy and the industrialists was manifested in facilitating the finances for expansion industrial groups that were controlled by different families (e.g., Adamjee, Dawood, Saigol, Isphahani, Valika). On the other hand, this alliance kept the wage rates down and ensured industrial peace by the suppression of the working class.

Further, the general anticommunist tendencies within the ruling circles, its developing alliances with Western powers and the ongoing agitation, strikes, and protests by CPP-supported unions created the argument for the government to make an alternative noncommunist-led trade union movement.[47] One of the major accomplishments of the Pakistani state was to encourage the formation of the All Pakistan Confederation of Labour (APCOL) in September 1950 as a counterweight to the communist-supported labor federations, especially the PTUF. The genesis of the new group started with the coming together of various trade union federations in East and West Pakistan. Soon after independence in 1947 in West Pakistan, the major anticommunist labor group was the Karachi-based Pakistan Federation of Labour (PFL). It was a continuation of the M.N. Roy-supported Indian Federation of Labour

and had a following primarily among port and dock workers, with M.A. Khatib as its leader. In East Bengal, the APTUF (earlier East Bengal Trade Union Federation) was headed by Dr. A.M. Mallik, a veteran trade union leader who later became the Federal Minister of Health and Work. His successor, Faiz Ahmed (different from Faiz Ahmed Faiz the poet and Vice President of the communist-backed PTUF), was as adamantly anticommunist as Dr. Mallik. Another group in East Bengal headed by the lawyer Nur ul Huda led a breakaway and more left-oriented faction of the APTUF called the Trade Union Federation of Pakistan (TUFP). However, by 1948–1949, through the efforts of Dr. Mallik and M.A. Khatib and, of course, the blessing of the state, APTUF and PFL had merged to form The All Pakistan Federation of Labour (APFL) that later through Dr. Mallik's persuasion also brought in TUFP to form the APCOL.

The government, through its Ministry of Law and Labour, was charged with the duty of maintaining industrial peace by creating systems of conciliation and to provide vocational training for technical personnel in the yet-small industrial sector. It also involved itself in issues around wage acts while basically following the preindependence Government of India legislation on trade union issues. The government's position was made clear in several major speeches given by Ministers and even Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan at various labor meetings.[48] Dr. Mallik, the Minister for Health and Work, who was one of the founding members of APCOL, summed up the basic tenets of the noncommunist trade union politics in his address to the first Punjab Conference of the APFL (the precursor of APCOL, thus showing the closeness of the government's position to the anticommunist trade union movement) in Samasata (Punjab) in April 1950.[49] While praising the workers and calling for an end to exploitation and oppression and for the distribution of wealth, he also asked the workers to continue to work hard to build the new nation. The relationship between the employers and employees hence should not be of conflict, he argued, but of mutual respect and shared responsibility so that the country's productivity would increase as that was the primary goal at this juncture in the nation's history. He warned both the employers and employees about taking a misguided turn, as that would cripple the entire nation; the interests of the two were interwoven. In the speech, there was of course invocation for the need to increase worker's wages, provide them adequate housing, and attend to their welfare needs. However, in contrast to the communist position, industrial disputes were to be handled under a system of collective bargaining and conciliation rather than of confrontation and strikes. The country, according to Mallik, was newly born and people had achieved freedom; now was a time to come together, forget differences, and build the nation. It was obvious that the state wanted a more compliant labor force, industrial peace, and a politically subdued populace among the working poor, and the formation of APCOL could be relied on to provide counterforce to the communist agitators.[50]

In addition to the ideological difference, the most significant aspect of APCOL's formation was that it had presence in both wings of the country and could easily challenge the presence of PTUF that was largely confined to Punjab. Although the PTUF and CPP had also started to focus on Karachi, they never could create a presence in East Bengal and hence achieve the status of a truly national organization. APCOL did accomplish this task, albeit with help from the government and with

ample assistance from international forces. Soon after its formation APCOL became affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the major anticommunist international confederation of labor headquartered in Belgium.[51] As much as this affiliation aided in the flow of resources to APCOL and its leadership, it was also an ideological counterweight to PTUF's joining the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Soviet-backed international labor group in 1950.[52]

The clamp down

As suggested above, during the late 1940s, the Public Safety Act and other draconian measures from the colonial era were reinvigorated and used to arrest and harass communist party workers and sympathetic trade unionists. Important members of CPP's central committee were periodically put in jail and communist publications were routinely banned or confiscated. By all accounts the government was firmly in control of the situation, using a law-and-order pretext to take vigorous action against any political threat from the left.

It is within the parameters of such political processes that we should place the most blatant attack on the CPP when on March 9, 1951, the Government of Pakistan brought charges of sedition and of plotting a military coup against certain leaders of its own military[53] and against members of the Central Committee of the CPP, Sajjad Zaheer (General Secretary) and Mohammad Ata. The poet and progressive intellectual Faiz Ahmed Faiz (who was never a card-carrying member of the Communist Party) was also accused of being a coconspirator and arrested along with the other army officers that day.[54]

This event in Pakistan's history is now known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case based on a crucial meeting in Rawalpindi at the residence of Major General Akbar Khan on February 23, 1951. Following the charges there were widespread arrests and a blanket clampdown on the Communist Party's activities and by the summer of 1951, although it had not been declared illegal, most of its first and second tiers of leadership were in jail, the party had been linked to a case of high treason, and many fellow travelers had left the popular front organizations due to the state's repression. The authorities had also seized party documents and now had a more thorough knowledge of the party's inner workings than ever before.[55] The conspiracy case gave the government a conduit to publicly revile the party as antistate and anti-Islam and increased its future vulnerability due to the added information that the police and intelligence services had about its workings.

The entire process crippled the movement and demoralized numerous cadres. The communist movement in Pakistan, nascent as it was, did not recover from this suppression for years.[56] There was no doubt that in the aftermath of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case there was general disillusionment and disarray among the members and cadres of the CPP. Once the party was officially banned in the summer of 1954 after the dismantling of the United Front government in East Bengal,[57] there was a new wave of political suppression along with arrests of the remaining active cadres. The party had to move its work underground and function in various mass fronts

(whether in student groups, labor fronts, or peasant organizations) in different parts of the country without a centralized structure guiding them. Further, by 1954 the CPP-supported PTUF had also been weakened and many had joined the APCOL as that was the only vehicle to conduct trade union politics in the country.

Yet, despite state-sponsored repressive measures, worker unrest increased. The deteriorating social and economic conditions of the working class and the disparity in income levels that were becoming evident in the Pakistan of the 1950s gave rise to several labor strikes. For example, in Karachi alone Communist Party fellow travelers and sympathizers in the autumn of 1951 organized strikes by the employees of Hotel Metropole, one of the most posh hotels in the city, by the transport workers union, at the Pakistan Tobacco Company and in the oil companies, Burmah Shell, Standard Vacuum, and Caltex.[58]According to estimates, between 1954 and 1957 there were more than 250 strikes in Karachi alone in which more than 200,000 workers were involved.[59]

However, laborers were periodically warned by government functionaries throughout the 1950s not to hamper the industrialization process with strikes and upheavals. The emerging state structure subordinated labor organizations by sponsoring, as mentioned above, anti-communist trade unions (APCOL) by banning left and popular trade unions, and passing draconian labor laws that effectively prevented collective bargaining or the right to strike.[60] Finally, the Martial Law in 1958 eventually made it more difficult to organize labor on a radical trade union platform.

The state in crisis

This attack on radicalized labor and communist activists was unfolding and intensified in an atmosphere of a perpetual political crisis that had engulfed Pakistan since the early part of the 1950s which culminated in the dissolution of the constituent assembly by the Governor General Ghulam Mohammad in October 1954. Between 1954 and 1958, Pakistan saw the changing of prime ministers at regular intervals. Mohammad Ali Bogra, Chaudary Mohamad Ali, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, I.I.Chudrigar, and Feroz Khan Noon, all served short stints as prime ministers. The country ratified its first constitution in 1956 by an assembly that was indirectly elected (along with nominated members). As Pakistan became a republic in 1956, the ailing governor general, Ghulam Mohammad, was replaced by Iskandar Mirza as President, a person who had been waiting in the wings for his chance at the helm of affairs. Despite the constitution and the nonrepresentativeness of the assembly, the promised and necessary elections were continuously postponed. With high food costs, a political system bordering on farcical, and the increasing dissatisfaction among working classes, the election and a legitimately elected civilian government may have been the only way out of the social and political impasse. In contrast on October 8, 1958, the President, Iskander Mirza, a proponent of "controlled democracy" at the best of times, worked with the army chief, Ayub Khan, to suspend the constitution, to dismiss the provincial and central governments, to ban all political parties, and to indefinitely postpone the elections.

In a counter coup on October 28, Ayub Khan took over supreme power and sent Iskander Mirza into exile.[61] The military takeover of the Pakistani state in 1958 intensified the repression against labor. To take an example, there was a work stoppage at the Adamjee Jute Mills in East Bengal on February 9, 1959. This was due to some worker grievances against the management. Although foreign observers thought of the strike as not having been instigated by radical trade unionists, the Martial Law authorities clamped down hard and used the pretext to severely punish those it thought of as "ring leaders." They were given five to six years in jail along with five lashes. Strikes were banned under the new regime and any kind of work stoppage (or political activity) was thought of as a threat by the government. Soon after on March 1959, the minister for Health and Social Welfare, Lt. General Burki, announced the government's new labor policy,[62] which was more favorable to the management and sought a restricted collective bargaining arrangement. For the regime, when the workers became restive, in Burki's own words, it needed to "sort the bastards out."[63] The junta's anticommunist and antilabor character was partly due to its authoritarian character, but also due to the Pakistan army's close alliance with the United States, and subsequently Pakistan served on the front lines of the US anticommunist policy in the region.[64]

Thinking toward the future

In Pakistan, the current economic model relies on foreign capital and loans from international financial institutions (a dependence that started in the 1950s). The privatization of large state-owned industries has also meant a lack of job security, an increase in contract labor, high rates of unemployment in the formal sector, flexible manufacturing regimes, and the dominance of informal/service sector work, creating new challenges for those involved in organizing industrial workers. In the rural areas, unfavorable and changing land tenancy laws, the failure to distribute agricultural land, and the impact of climate change have led to continuous migration patterns to the cities or, for those who are lucky, to the Gulf Arab states. Further, inflationary pressures such as high food prices, lack of growth in the industrial sector, and an anemic private investment rate are bound to create further social conflict. It should not surprise us, as the theorist Laurent Berlant[65] argues that risk, uncertainty, and precarity have also become constitutive social experiences for many in Pakistan. In these terms, the struggle of underpaid public employees and the increasingly audible voices (yet unorganized) of the urban poor in the public sphere today are not that different from those experienced by workers soon after independence and in the 1950s.

The ethnic and sectarian tensions that have erupted in Pakistan in the last few decades may add another twist to unresolved histories that were latent at the incipient moment of the country's creation, the diversity of Muslim experience in South Asia and bringing them together in the argument of Muslim nationalism (the uncertainty depicted by Manto). Throughout the chapter, I have foregrounded concerns regarding social and economic inequity so courageously emphasized by generations of left-leaning activists in Pakistan. Yet, perhaps, unlike the emphasis on class solidarity that people like Sajjad Zaheer pushed for in their teleological understanding of historic

progression, and the urgency of the issues notwithstanding, rather than invoke grand narratives of resistance and working-class solidarities, the current historical moment may call for some introspection and rethinking. As David Scott argues, the answer is not to turn again to an already-available teleology that takes us from here to there.[66] Questions perhaps need to be asked to create a politics where the category of difference (ethnic, gender, religious) is retained with a renewed emphasis on social equality and economic justice, a vision of a future where identity-based politics is restructured and redefined with a politics of social equality.

Notes

1 The issue here is what becomes visible when the trousers fall, as circumcision would define the victim as Muslim or Hindu. We can also assume that the killer and the victim are both males as it is more likely that a female would be raped and then killed or left to die.

2 See David Gilmartin, "Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative." *Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 4 (1998): 1068–95.

3 See Barbara Metcalf, *Moral Conduct and Authority* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

4 Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

5 From the late 1940s and for most of the 1950s, defense accounted for almost 50 percent of the total state expenditure. There were visits to Pakistan by US naval ships in 1948, and in May 1948 the US War Assets Administration gave a credit of $10 million to the Pakistani Ministry of Finance to purchase US surplus military hardware. In May–June 1950, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan made an official trip to the United States, spurning an offer from the Soviet Union. The following July, Pakistan entered the IMF and subsequently received several grants and loans from the US government and from the World Bank. To manage this developing aid and military relationship, the Ford Foundation stepped in to train local administrators, social scientists, and military officers. By 1954, after several high-level visits, including that of Vice President Richard Nixon, Pakistan entered into a US-sponsored military pact against communist aggression by becoming a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and then, in 1955, part of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) that also included Iran and Turkey. See Jamil Rashid and Hasan Gardezi, "Independent Pakistan: Its Political Economy," in *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship*, eds. Hasan Gardezi and Jamil Rashid (London: Zed Press, 1983), 4–19.

6 For a more recent scholarly assessment of the refugee issue in Pakistan, see Elisabetta Iob, "A Betrayed Promise Promise? The Politics of the Everyday State and Resettling of Refugees in Pakistani Punjab, 1947–1962" (unpublished dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2013).

7 See, Sarah Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sind: 1947–1962* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), ch. 3; Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar (2007), *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press).

8 Ibid., 53–54.

9 See Allen McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

10 Jinnah dies in September 1948.
11 For a CPI perspective on this process, see *Who Rules Pakistan* (Bombay Communist Party Publication, August 1948).
12 McGrath, *The Destruction*, 46–47.
13 Ibid., 41–42.
14 Ibid., 65–68.
15 For example, under Liaquat, the government introduced the Public and Representatives Offices (Disqualification) Act, also known as PRODA.
16 The accusation was the use by Mamdot of evacuee property in Punjab as political patronage. Ibid., 49.
17 Literature on the conflict in Kashmir during years following the Partition of British India is too large to be noted here. For a Communist perspective from the era, see *Imperialist Aggression in Kashmir* (Bombay: Mishal Publishing House, 1950).
18 McGrath, *The Destruction*, 44–45.
19 By the end of 1949, there were twenty-one new political parties, mostly consisting of Muslim League dissenters. Ibid., 64.
20 Ibid., 53.
21 See TNA/PRO FO1110/210, Communism in West Punjab Secret Memo; Communism and Communist Activities in Pakistan, October 1949.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 In terms of the popular press, the major thorns in the government's side were Mian Iftikharuddin's two newspapers, the *Pakistan Times*, and the Urdu daily, *Imroze*. British and US functionaries in Pakistan accused both of using the Soviet Union's TASS news service to print anti-British and anti-US articles under the byline "our correspondents." The National Archives, Public Records Office (hereafter TNA/PRO) FO 1110/44, Confidential Memo, 8 December 1948.
25 TNA/PRO FO 1110/44. Outline of a Plan of Assistance to the Government of Pakistan by the United States Information Service and the British Information Service. Secret Memo (not dated).
26 For example, the Lahore Press carried a series of state-sponsored articles against the speeches made by CPI members and trade unionists (and the reading out of Sajjad Zaheer's message) during the May Day celebrations in 1949. It was alleged that the speakers proclaimed that communism was superior to Islamic principles. This led to a resolution condemning communist activity in Pakistan and was part of the sermon in over forty mosques in Lahore following May Day. TNA/PRO FO1110/210, Communism and Communist Activities in Pakistan (October 1949). In his memoirs, Z. A. Ahmad, the CPI leader who had visited Pakistan in 1948 for a few days, talks about how he saw a progressive public meeting in Lahore being disrupted by men raising anticommunist slogans and equating them with anti-Islam anti-Pakistan elements. Z. A. Ahmad, *Meri Jeewan ki Kuch YadeiN* (Karachi: Idara e Yadgar e Ghalib, 2004), 275.
27 *The Status of Organized Labor in Pakistan*. OIR Report # 5286, June 26, 1950. Department of State, Division of Research for Near East and Africa. Office of Intelligence Research. Central Decimal Files 1950–1954. 890 D.06, 7–750 Box 5546, National Archives, Maryland, USA. There were unions in Lyallpur Cotton Mills, Attock Oil Company, Khewra Salt Mines, and Batapur Union in Punjab. In Karachi, the port and dock workers were organized, and there were some unions in the oil industry and among tram workers. Also see Iqbal Leghari, "The Socialist Movement

in Pakistan: An Historical Survey" (unpublished PhD dissertation, Laval University, Montreal, 1979), 32.

28 Ibid.

29 See *The Status of Organized Labor in Pakistan*.

30 See *Who Rules Pakistan*.

31 These were part of the Basic Demands put forward by the Conference. Minimum wage for unskilled labor was estimated at Rs. 60/month, skilled labor Rs. 100/month, and minimum grade clerks Rs. 150/month. There was further demand for cost of living allowances, free airy houses, free education until tenth grade (matriculation) for children of workers, free medical aid and dispensaries in labor colonies, six-hour workdays and thirty-six-hour weeks, one-month paid leave a year, the right to organize unions, and the repeal of the Public Safety Act. See PRO DO 142/160, "Weekly Report, Deputy High Commissioner, Lahore." May 10, 1950.

32 A Chinese delegation was also present. PTUF showed its closeness to the CPP by speaking for the release of Communist trade union workers and leaders and for the repeal of warrants of arrest against Sajjad Zaheer and other senior members of the regional committees. Ibid. *The Status of Organized Labor in Pakistan*. OIR Report # 5286.

33 The Calcutta Congress elected the new General Secretary of CPI, B. T. Ranadive (1904–1990). See Review of Second Congress of the Communist Party of India, *Documents of the Communist Party of India*, Volume 5.

34 PRO FO 317/84237. Note prepared by Sir William Jenkins on P. C. Joshi.

35 Report on Pakistan, Review of the Second Congress, 757–61. *Documents of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. 5. See also Iqbal Leghari, "The Socialist Movement in Pakistan: An Historical Survey" (unpublished PhD dissertation, Laval University, Montreal, 1979), 42–44. See Leghari, "The Socialist Movement in Pakistan," 42–44.

36 This line was indirectly supported by the Soviet Union. See V. V. Balabushevich, "New Stage in the National Liberation Struggle of the People of India." *Problems of Economics* (Moscow), no. 8 (1949): 32–59.

37 Mian Anwer Ali, *Central Committee Instructions. The Communist Party of West Pakistan in Action* (Lahore: Government Printing Press, 1952), 25–34.

38 Leghari, "The Socialist Movement in Pakistan," 53. See also *Pakistan Times*, April 17, 1948, 1; April 27, 1948, 3.

39 See London, TNO/PRO 890D.06/1-852. Also see "American Embassy, Karachi Despatch 742," January 8, 1952.

40 *Who Rules Pakistan,* 9–11.

41 Sharaf Ali was also the secretary of the Karachi District Organizing Committee of the CPP and a member of the Provincial Organizing Committee. He was originally from Allahabad in UP, India.

42 PRO DO 142/160, "Pakistan Labour Review, Report by Labour Advisor to the High Commissioner, Karachi," April 8, 1949.

43 Z. A. Shaheed, "Role of the Government in the Development of the Labour Movement," in *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship*, eds. H. Gardezi and J. Rashid (London: Zed Press, 1983), 270–90.

44 See Hamza Alavi, "Class and State," in *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship*, eds. H. Gardezi and J. Rashid (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). PIDC was formed through an act of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly in April 1950. The senior bureaucrat, Ghulam Faruque (chairman of the Jute and Cotton Board), became the chairman, while the other two directors were Mr. Amjad Ali (who had served in Washington as minister) and Mirza Ahmad Isphahani, the brother of a recent

ambassador to Washington. Both came from major industrial and commercial families. National Archives, USA 890-D.053/2.252, Foreign Service Dispatch, 2 February 1952, Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation.

45 The state also relied heavily on agricultural exports, specifically East Pakistani jute, to subsidize industrial development in West Pakistan. See Gustav F. Papaneck, *Pakistan's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

46 Fasihuddin Salar, "The Working Class Movement in Pakistan" (unpublished MS, 1986).

47 Leghari, "The Socialist Movement in Pakistan," 47–55; Anwer Ali, *The Development of Trade Union Movement in Sind. The Communist Party*: 76–82. See note 37.

48 PRO DO 142/160, "Speech by Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan at the first Pakistan Labor Conference in Karachi," February 8, 1949. After rhetorically acknowledging the economic and social needs of the workers, the address continues to emphasize conciliation over conflict in their relationship with their employers and the government.

49 See "Memo, Pakistan Policy on Labor," May 4, 1950 (enclosed speech of Dr. Mallik at Samasata, April 30, 1950), 890D.06/5-450. US National Archives, Maryland.

50 This said, the government or the APCOL leadership could never fully control the left tendencies among the membership. For example, Kamruddin Ahmed, a known leftist trade union leader in East Bengal, became the President of APTUF soon after the group joined APCOL, creating much apprehension among some of the anticommunist leaders, the government functionaries, and also the US Embassy. See "Department of State, Dacca Despatch 56, October 6, 1950. Labor Developments-Election of New President of APTUF." 890D.06/10-2050. US National Archives, Maryland. Further, although APCOL was close to the Muslim League government, the Punjab Provincial Muslim League and the Karachi District Muslim League did indeed try to create labor wings in the early 1950s to challenge the APCOL leadership. See "American Embassy Karachi Despatch 732. Annual Labor Report for Pakistan, February 23, 1951." 890D.06/2-2351. US National Archives, Maryland. This uncertainty about rank-and-file and leadership continued until the mid-1950s. In 1954, the PTUF was still strong in Punjab workshops of the Northwest Railways and the APCOL leadership had to contemplate a joint front with the communists in order to negotiate with the government. However, this tactical arrangement was cut short by none other than C. R. Aslam, a member of the Communist Party until the early 1950s who had become the head of the Punjab APCOL after a flirtation with the Punjab Muslim League's labor wing and by the strong intervention by M. A. Khatib, the central APCOL leader. See "American Embassy Karachi Despatch 217, May 24, 1954." 890D.06/5-2454. US National Archives, Maryland.

51 For ICFTU's anticommunist politics, see Anthony Carew, "Conflict within the ICFTU: Anti-Communism and Anti-Colonialism in the 1950s." *International Review of Social History* 41 (1996): 147–81; Anthony Carew, "The American Labor Movement in Fizzland: The Free Trade Union Committee and the CIA." *Labor History* 39, no. 1 (1998): 25–32.

52 See "American Embassy Foreign Service Despatch, Karachi Despatch 732. Annual Labor Report for Pakistan. February 23, 1951." 890D.06/2-2351. US National Archives, Maryland. By the mid-1950s, with the banning of the Communist Party and the suppression of PTUF, APCOL remained the only trade union through which earlier members and mid-level leaders of PTUF could conduct trade union politics, albeit in an atmosphere of intense anticommunist hostility and of general suspicion

and surveillance. See "Foreign Service Despatch, Karachi Despatch 217, May 24, 1954. Labor Developments in Pakistan July 1953-May 1954. February 23, 1951." 890D.06/5-2454. US National Archives, Maryland.

53 The main accused were fifteen men and women: Major General Akbar Khan, Air Commodore Janjua, Major General Nazir Ahmad, Brigadier Sadiq Khan, Brigadier M.A Latif Khan, Lt. Colonel Zia-Ud-Din, Lt. Colonel Niaz Muhammad Arbab, Captain Khizar Hayat, Major Hasan Khan, Major Ishaq Muhaamad, Captain Zafrullah Poshni, Mrs. Nasim Akbar Khan, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Syed Sajjad Zaheer, and Muhammad Hussain Ata. For detailed coverage of the military side of the "conspiracy," see Hasan Zaheer, *The Times and Trials of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case 1951* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

54 Zaheer and Ata were arrested a few weeks later.

55 The seized documents were published as a text that was circulated among the intelligence community in Pakistan. See Mian Anwer Ali, *The Communist Party of West Pakistan in Action* (Deputy Inspector General of the Criminal Investigation Department, Punjab (CID), 1952).

56 A discussion of these arrests and attacks on the CPP in the post-Conspiracy era can be found in PRO DO 35.2591, Report on the Communist Activity in Pakistan.

57 Under the pretext of the law and order situation, the state dismissed the elected government on May 30, 1954, only a few months after it was elected into power. Governor's direct rule was imposed and Iskander Mirza the Defence Secretary (and later President), was sent as the Governor to "control" the situation.

58 See PRO 890D.06/1-852, "American Embassy, Karachi Despatch 742," January 8, 1952.

59 See Fasihuddin Salar, "The Working Class Movement in Pakistan" (unpublished manuscript, 1986).

60 In my interviews with trade union workers from the period, they remembered how radical workers and those desiring to form unions were either harassed, beaten by local thugs hired by the industrialists, or dismissed from work on one pretext or another. With rampant unemployment and a surplus of labor, many workers desisted from joining unions due to the fear of such reprisals.

61 Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), ch. 5.

62 Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 under which most labor laws were functioning until the time was repealed and reenacted under the rubric of Industrial Dispute Ordinance. The ordinance brought more industries under the essential services banner prohibiting the formation of unions there. Strikes were made illegal and the registration of unions was made difficult. To safeguard against contravening ILO conventions, a system of conciliation and mediation was devised. Conciliation officers were government functionaries that referred unsettled disputes to industrial courts for mediation where the process could take months to settle. The idea was to move labor grievances from the streets to the courts and boardrooms under the watchful eye of state functionaries.

63 See PRO, FO371/14477. Confidential Memos from Office of the British High Commissioner New Delhi, February 21, 1959, and March 1, 1959.

64 The Pakistani state has, since the late 1940s, continued to serve as a clearinghouse for information for the security agendas of Western Powers. Ayub himself was hailed by the United States as a major leader who was keeping the communist menace at bay in Asia.

65 Laurent Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

66 David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

3

Contested Meanings of Postcolonialism and Independence in Burma

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The challenge of understanding Burma's first postindependence decade

Although the 1950s was a vitally important decade for the emerging states of South and Southeast Asia, there is a great deal about Burma's experience following independence that we do not currently understand. Because of difficulties in accessing government archives in Burma, the 1950s are often approached as if this time was nothing more than a prelude to the establishment of a military regime in the 1960s, setting the tone for the militarized nationalism of an oppressively centralizing state in the decades to follow.[1] Given what we know of the country's later history, this kind of truncated narrative is understandable to a degree. During these years, apparently irreconcilable internal differences seem to have arisen between key political parties responsible for forging the independent nation. Internal problems also combined with, and were exacerbated by, the pressures exerted upon Burma's border regions, given the rise of the People's Republic of China and the emerging Cold War in the 1950s.[2] Certainly conflict spilled across the northern borders of the nation from China, leaving deep scars in the early political experience of some of its key, and newly formulated, "ethnic" states and divisions.[3]

Set against this background, and when the history of the region as a whole is taken into account, Burma would have had an exceptional political trajectory if its democracy had been able to resist those forces of chaos and violence. Nonetheless, our lack of detailed knowledge about the history of these years undoubtedly limits our understanding of the complex relationships, discussions, decisions, and political positions that emerged within Burma and across its many divides during these first postindependence years. Rather than a detailed understanding of the complexity of issues and experiences that unfolded on the ground, we are left with an intuition, a sense of a history that points to an inevitable outcome—of violence.

This chapter cannot fill many of the gaps alluded to above, and its two-part structure can merely point toward the ongoing difficulties created by that lack

of knowledge, while also hinting at the richness of the questions that remain unanswered. By outlining first the challenging nature of the "postcolonial moment" in the contemporary politics of Burma/Myanmar, I highlight the ongoing problem of what happens when a sense of history fills the national narrative in the absence of any understanding based on close scrutiny of policy, department files, and the minutiae of governance. The constitutional contest over the "foreignness" of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself is also a construct of that vacuum-filling sense of history; it reveals how deeply rooted so many untested assumptions remain in contemporary Myanmar, which fix certain beliefs about the problems faced by the country as it sought to claim its postcolonial moment in 1948.

The second part of this chapter will raise questions about just one of those assumptions that drives this sense of history, and which is in need of more detailed research. This relates to the perspectives of some of the so-called "ethnic minority" communities within the new nation during the first years after independence, and the attitude of some of their leaders to the postcolonial moment in centers well away from Rangoon. Indeed, their moment had seemingly come with the agreement signed with Aung San at Panglong, in what is now Southern Shan State, in 1947.[4] I would argue that the truncated version of history leaps from Panglong to the end of the 1950s and the fact that, by 1962, the civilian government had collapsed while the "ethnic" states and border regions were almost entirely in revolt against a center that had chosen to replace their aspirations for a federal union with an increasingly tightly centralized unitary state under military rule.[5]

The pressures for internal reconfiguration at the center around forces of militarized nationalism certainly seem to have been impossibly hard to resist. Moreover, the fact that the Burmese battalions of the Indian Army had been dominated by non-Bamar soldiers has acquired a heightened importance in the national narrative of the country's unraveling after its democratic transition. This narrative emphasizes the perception of colonially tinged disloyalty of the militarized ethnic forces at what should have been the defining moment of liberation of the wider Union of Burma. As I shall suggest, we would be wise to challenge some of these underlying assumptions and deny the apparent ease and naturalness with which these representations account for how the country fell into ethnic violence as if there were no other routes to the future.[6]

What connects these two representations of the postcolonial moment in this chapter—the discourse of foreignness and the militarized nature of minorities—is that identifying a place, time, and even position for Burma's postcolonial moment is, in reality, very difficult. Arising from their experiences before and after 1948, different communities have developed complex perspectives of what authentic independence might mean. To understand this contest more fully, then, it is first necessary to outline some of the particular conditions of the colonial experience, at least insofar as it has generated a sense of the colonial past that is intelligible to those who struggle to understand how so much potential seemed to be squandered through the ensuing decades of violence.

The Burmese experience of colonialism and pushing the postcolonial moment back to 1962

Colonialism was in many ways brutal and traumatizing in Burma and has had a lasting impact on the country.[7] The contest over that impact has been deeply embedded in claims and counterclaims about what the future of the country looked like to those nationalist leaders who raised the Union flag in 1948 and who may be regarded as the true inheritor and facilitator of that vision—be it the army or Aung San Suu Kyi. That the postcolonial has been achieved but requires constant defense and protection lies at the heart of the contested vision of what postcolonialism meant and means. The notion of the subversive power of colonial bodies, and the fear of residual colonialism located in or allied to certain communities and "non-Burman" experiences, has permeated a great deal of the rhetoric of threat upon which militarized government has justified its own authority in recent decades. Some of those bodies were the other within, such as the many non-Burman groups that were otherwise identified as "indigenous" in the nationalities law of the new state. An alternative set of embodied threats were the "other without," such as the many communities of Asian origin who were considered foreigners who came to the country en masse under the British flag.

As other contributors to this volume attest, Pakistan has had to grapple with defining not only a postcolonial moment but also, and just as importantly, a post-India moment. We might also argue a similar case for Burma, being so often marginalized in the history of South Asia, if not excluded from its pages.[8] In India itself, colonialism is considered something that was done to India rather than something that it also participated in and did to other peoples and places by dint of being the central pivot of the British Empire in Asia. For many of the modern nations of Southeast Asia that gained independence after the Second World War, expressing clear visions of what the postcolonial might look like was complicated by the demographic layering of the colonial experience: being governed from a western metropole but with the daily experience of the social, political, and economic colonization of their countries by people (predominantly men) of Asian origin who were the agents of that colonization or else were seeking to take advantage of it.[9] Demographic transformation brought about by large-scale transmigration within Asia, of which South Asian transmigration was a significant component in many areas, was a vital part of being colonized in many parts of Southeast Asia, and most especially Burma.[10] It should perhaps not surprise us, therefore, that in many countries of the region, a postcolonial moment was realized only when it was felt that this demographic change had been redressed. Often this was effected through sharpened racialized discourses, which in Burma were frequently of a highly xenophobic nature and led to considerable violence.[11] The (final) forced expulsion of so many people of South Asian descent in 1962 was a significant postcolonial moment in Burma.[12]

Of course, peoples have long moved across the region.[13] Yet the colonial experience had transformed the understanding of these relationships. British colonial rule in Burma violently tore out the roots of the former governmental system, dispatching

the ruling Buddhist Konbaung dynasty ignominiously into (Indian) exile in 1885.[14] Moreover, British rule swiftly removed the framework of local governance that bound villages to central authority and imposed myriad laws, regulations, and systems that had been honed in India.[15] Indeed, all of Burma was formally made a part of the British Indian Empire at this time. From being one of Southeast Asia's greatest ancestral kingdoms, Burma became, in 1897, a Lieutenant Governor's province, which it remained until 1937, when it saw formal separation from India. During these four decades, the political and military administration was run by a small number of British officials supported in the first rank by British and Indian officers of the Indian Army and the Indian Civil Service.[16] Moreover, the opportunities for free travel between a now-united India and Burma facilitated the expansion of older South Asian networks of trade and banking. This form of economic migration highlighted the worst effects of colonial rule on the economy, land tenure, and, in the case of Burmese women who married South Asian men, the much decried "miscegenation" of the national bloodline.[17]

We might compare this situation with the postcolonial possibilities of nationhood farther west in what had been Indochina. In Cambodia and Laos, independence in 1954 would entail freedom not just from French rule but also from the dominance of the Vietnamese in their political and economic life, given that Vietnamese bureaucrats had been moved into the key administrative roles of state and were thus the local face of French colonization.[18] Meanwhile, on the Malay peninsula to the south—being the other site of British colonial authority in Southeast Asia—people had to grapple with sharp issues of demographic transformation brought about by the peninsula's integration into the global economic system of imperialism and the military structures developed on the subcontinent.[19] However, unlike in central Burma, there remained significant spaces in the Malay peninsula in which "traditional" authority still resided and operated politically, opening up opportunities for a different kind of postcolonial vision at independence.

In Burma, then, the colonial imposition was a psychological trauma twice over for nationalists knowing both that they faced demographic domination in the cities and that the monarchical system (which had revolved around an ethnic Bamar line) could never be reinstated in any future vision.[20] Colonization in Burma was thus experienced not merely as a phenomenon with a white British face but as one from other parts of Asia in the absence of any regal protection to domesticate those forces, producing a sharpened social, economic, and cultural antagonism toward "non-indigenous" settlers.[21] The first constitution of independent Burma reflected this sense of the rupture of the colonial imposition. Thus the 1947 constitution distinguished between different kinds of citizenship depending upon one's birth status in relation to the chronology of colonial rule. This was repeated all the way down to the 1982 Nationality Act, in which indigeneity was formally encoded as descent from a group deemed to be resident in Burma before 1823, the year before the British first gained control of parts of the west and south east of the country through victory in the first Anglo-Burmese War. This date-specific connotation of *jus soli* combined with *jus sanguinis* citizenship denied the claims to full citizenship of any person who was of South Asian or Chinese descent, as neither people were deemed to have been

locally resident "indigenous" communities prior to British colonial interventions and therefore had no right of passing the claim of citizenship onto their descendants by birth. This date frame for full citizenship was a means of wiping out colonial influence from the blood territory of the nation.

This experience (or at least the sense of this history in a postindependence nationalist narrative of its effects) has shaped the ongoing fear of the colonial threat. Following independence in January 1948, postcolonialism still had to be created. For some nationalists, Burma's true postcolonial moment could only come when there had been the massive relocation of the many "non-indigenous" peoples who had become a vital part of the economic, military, and political life of the former colony. There had been a buildup of intercommunal tensions in the decade following the Great Depression as the Burmese nationalist movement, epitomized by the military *Tat* that sought to reclaim the Burma Army for the Burmese,[22] espoused an increasingly hostile attitude to the many "land-grabbers" and "money-lenders" who were deemed responsible for displacing Burmese people from their lands and taking control of their livelihoods.[23] If we compare this with the subject-making of the Indian peasant landholder discussed by Benjamin Siegel in Chapter 11, we can see some sharp distinctions in very simple terms. The moral vision of Burmese landownership was made complicated at the point of independence by the fact that postcolonial recovery was not rooted so much in personal ideas of citizenship and responsibility, but rather a more violent discourse around reclaiming land that had been seized by landowners of South Asian origin. Hence, nationalization of land under military rule as a policy of postcolonial redemption was considered a moral nationalist necessity rather than stressing the need to increase the personal wealth and autonomy of the small landholder. This, along with the complexity of the colonial experience, added to all ideological developments around Burmese citizenship and nationhood and suited an increasingly militarized narrative of how the independent Burmese state *should* achieve the condition of being postcolonial: we have independence but we are *not yet* postcolonial.

Following his coup in 1962, General Ne Win consolidated power with his own vehicle: the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP).[24] This was both an ideological and military intervention that was intended to protect the distinctively Burmese (and Buddhist) characteristics of the nation's intellectual, moral, political, and economic life after a decade of experimentation with a democratic system. The threat from the outside world was summoned in the BSPP's proclamations and programs of indoctrination. In the case of Burma, this fear of the latent power of colonialism extending way beyond the moment of independence materialized and enabled the military reinterpretation of the sense of national loss, and the need to protect the distinctively "Burmese" in all areas of life, to gain traction in the social memory of the colonial experience in the country that had lasted in full for sixty years from 1886 to 1948.[25]

Whereas race riots had occurred in the 1930s and had continued to flare with greater intensity into the 1950s, following the takeover of 1962, life was made unbearable for many Burma-born men and women of South Asian ancestry. In this respect, then, 1962 represented a more decisive postcolonial moment than 1948, with

many thousands forced to leave the country, often becoming stateless in the process, much as had occurred elsewhere with Partition and its tragic onflows.

We can see these concerns being played out in contemporary politics and the issues provide some insights into the perceived challenges of maintaining independence against predatory external (neocolonial) forces and defining what postcolonial Burma/Myanmar should be. The aftermath of the election of 2015 is particularly illuminating in this respect. When Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), swept to victory, there was little surprise at the outcome. But if the party leader's ascendancy to the position of President would have been unproblematic in many other countries, this was not possible in her case. The constitution, put in place in 2008 following a highly controversial referendum, explicitly stated that no Burmese citizen could take up the office of president if they had a spouse or children who were foreign citizens. There was never any doubt that this clause had been introduced by the predominantly military regime to limit the political aspirations of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and her followers in a very direct way. In 1972, Aung San Suu Kyi had married the British academic Michael Aris (1946–99), a preeminent scholar of the history and culture of Tibet based at Oxford, where they had made their home. They also had two sons, who were also obviously British citizens, too.

The presidential bar in the 2008 constitution was so obviously intended to limit the political ascendancy of Aung San Suu Kyi that this is often considered as being its only rationale. Yet the origins of this bar lie in the militarized nationalist mind-set that has permeated the official postindependence narrative of Burmese nationalism for many decades. Indeed, it was enshrined in the constitution enacted at independence itself, as a perception of the fragility and vulnerability of the postcolonial. Independence and postcolonialism are not considered to be mutually occurring and reinforcing moments in the country's history, arising simultaneously when the Union of Burma's flag was raised on January 4, 1948. Although independence may have been achieved legally at that time, the aspiration toward a truly postcolonial Burma still had to be realized. The nature of the postcolonial was still a vital battleground to be won by reclaiming the demographics of power as Asian proxies of the colonial power.

The conflation of ideas of indigeneity, marriage, and the (Buddhist) bodies of Burmese women as sites of nationalist defense have been also seen clearly in recent years, as with the 2014 Emergency Provisions on Marriage Act for Burmese Buddhist Women, which was coupled with a Religious Conversion Bill. The former was drafted to stop Burmese Buddhist women from marrying non-Buddhist men. The latter was intended to disallow attempts by non-Buddhist men to convert in order that they might be able to marry Burmese women. To most observers, these laws seemed targeted mainly toward limiting intermarriage between Burmese women and Muslim men, particularly of South Asian descent or who are deemed nonindigenous or identifying as Rohingya. Implicit in this restriction too, however, was the idea that the country had still failed to cleanse itself of a colonial legacy of mass migration from India, and from Bengal in particular.

Thinking more broadly about the constitutional bar on Aung San Suu Kyi in relation to these wider concerns about intermarriage, migration, and indigeneity, we see it maps onto a much bigger context in which the postcolonial vision of the

Burmese state is still being contested. One strand of that is through the limit on Aung San Suu Kyi through her marriage and her capacity to achieve the highest political office; another is the violence meted out to communities deemed to be national interloper—the Rohingya people.

Panglong: Postcolonial visions and the postcolonial moment in the peripheries of Burma

The recent contest over the presidency was particularly acute because Daw Aung San Suu Kyi embodies an alternative narrative of a postcolonial moment that was lost before the point of independence. Within a decade of that moment, major internal conflicts had erupted in the country. These civil wars went on to become some of the longest continuous armed insurgencies in the modern world. Even as they are still being resolved in the present tortuous process of bringing disparate parties together in a national ceasefire agreement, some areas of Burma/Myanmar continue to be sites of ongoing violence and conflict. Here, and for many of the so-called "Ethnic" or "Nationality" states that were created in 1948, a different set of questions about the meaning of independence and postcolonialism arises. However, Aung San Suu Kyi has a particular heritage in relation to this narrative, which is also predicated on contested visions of the Panglong Agreement of February of 1947 as a symbolic marker of the achievement of the postcolonial.

A great deal of Aung San Suu Kyi's legitimacy as a political icon was initially derived from her ancestry. She is, after all, the daughter of the Burmese nationalist hero, General Aung San, who had negotiated the tricky path that led to the early withdrawal of the British from Burma. Neither Aung San Suu Kyi nor the military-civilian government she ousted in 2015, and that she oversees as State Counsellor, can completely disentangle their difficult and complex mutual relationship from their shared historical genealogy. Indeed Aung San Suu Kyi has even played to this, even declaring her fondness and "love" for the Burma Army on BBC Radio 4 in 2013, at a time when the *Tatmadaw* was engaged in renewed armed attacks in the Kachin state, and as a means of confirming her nationalist loyalties and (military) heritage at a time when she was concerned about the impending election. The battle over who is the true inheritor of Aung San's vision of a postcolonial future, which was certainly derailed by his assassination in July 1947, is also a battle over which narrative of Burma's history will prevail into Burma's postelection future.

At independence, Burma included many regions populated mainly by non-Bamar communities who were well away from the traditional heartland controlled by the Burmese monarchy. The nation's new borderlines incorporated formerly loosely administered territories, which possessed strong local identities hinged upon distinctiveness in language, culture, and history. Despite the long histories of interconnection with the Burmese state, many had to be persuaded that they could be equally Burmese as "Kachin" or "Karen" or "Shan."[26]

Not all these areas were montane or highland. The key areas of the Shan States, for instance, were handled by the British imperial administration in similar ways to the

princely states of India. Indeed, when it came to deciding the political future of these areas, direct comparisons were often drawn with states such as Manipur to the east, whose frontier had been the disputed cause of the very first Anglo-Burmese War of 1824. Certainly the patchwork was complex much as it was fragmented.

To appreciate the complexity of these issues, we need to connect Burma again to its South Asian colonial heritage. The language of administration in these border states and frontier areas was brought in wholesale from India by application of such designations as Scheduled or Excluded Areas. The territories that surrounded Burma along its eastern, northern, and western boundaries, for instance, were all historically autonomous areas, although many had intricately interwoven histories with Burmese kingdoms.[27] The northernmost territories beyond Upper Burma, and extending from Assam to Yunnan, were also connected geopolitically with the North East Frontier of India, being part of a broader military scheme that was intended to mirror the North West Frontier Province to the west. This meant that the so-called "tribal" areas were governed only indirectly and retained a large degree of political autonomy. In short, their peoples felt themselves neither to be wholly a part of British Burma nor yet to have ever been dominated by the previous Burmese kingdoms.

The situation in the years leading up to independence was complicated by two particular interwar developments, and then by the experience of war itself. The Frontier Areas, as they were known, had had their own administrative bureaucracy (of a skeleton nature), since 1922, as a result of the same processes that had developed around diarchy that had been introduced in India. However, in the years around the Second World War, this Frontier Areas Administration was energized by a new kind of official who was more engaged with, and empathetic to, what were believed to be quite distinctive and specific "tribal" needs, mirrored on the Indian side by the likes of J. H. Hutton and others working in similar spaces. In Burma, Noel (H. N. C.) Stevenson was particularly dominant in the years leading up to independence in promoting a voice for the continued autonomy of the frontier areas beyond independence.[28] Some frontier officials lobbied hard for their autonomy, and even their inclusion with the putative Crown Colony that was at various points proposed for Assam and northeast India. Indeed, this plan was extended even further in Burma, with advocates such as Stevenson seeking autonomy right up to the point when the local elite from these areas themselves signed the Panglong Agreement with Aung San in February of 1947.

Furthermore, the Burmese battalions of the Indian Army were composed in the main of non-Bamar recruits, leading to the Burma Army becoming a heightened symbol of resistance to colonialism during the Second World War, in ways that also put the Burma Army in direct opposition to many non-Bamar recruits fighting with British and Allied forces. This, when allied to relatively more successful experiences of conversion to Christianity carried out by missionaries in the frontier areas than among the majority Burman population, became a further symbol of the social and political discontinuity of the new Burmese state.[29]

For those areas beyond the central power base of British Burma that did not identify themselves as culturally or socially "Burmese," the prospect of "independence" posed a somewhat different set of problems and prospects than it did for Burmese

nationalists, whether they were ardent supporters of the Panglong Agreement or not. What might independence mean in these areas that had never been formally part of the Burmese kingdom historically? From whom or from what do you become independent if you are to be incorporated into a nation of which you were never formally a part? What is the postcolonial moment in a place that was not directly colonized but retained a significant sense of local autonomy? The whole idea of the postcolonial moment becomes further complicated in these peripheral areas when that sense of autonomy is replaced by incorporation into a state that is deemed itself to be a colonizing force.

So what might they have shared? The founding declarations of independence of formerly colonized countries obviously acquire iconic status and are worth exploring in this light. The Declaration on Independence of Vietnam, for example, has been endlessly translated and subject to academic scrutiny about its origins and audience. The short and purposeful Proklamasi of Sukarno and Hatta has similarly become iconic of a particular moment that made the postcolonial a reality. In the absence of a document expressly labeled as a declaration of independence, though, the Panglong Agreement is the nearest that the modern Burmese state has to such a document. It has also become critical in the contest over the postcolonial vision at the point of independence in ways that continue to unfold. Signed between General Aung San and a number of non-Burman community leaders (but not all), and like other documents expressly intended to bring about postcolonial futures, it was also intended as a mechanism. In this case it was a strategic positioning, largely to reassure British officials who doubted Aung San's capacity to bring the non-Bamar groups into agreement about the constitution of the independent state that a strategy was in place that would facilitate their early departure without fear of the country falling apart. The Panglong Agreement was a necessary proof on the part of Aung San that he was capable of leading these Frontier elites together in a mutually beneficial future, counteracting the negative warnings of the likes of Stevenson and others that the frontier areas would be further colonized by the Burmese state.

Although it is different to the Proklamasi, there are certain characteristics that are similar. The Proklamasi states simply that independence has been declared and that all other matters will be decided in due course about the details. In many respects, the Panglong Agreement is largely of this nature, although with a few more details. It is a slim document whose symbolic importance outweighs its substance. But the Agreement includes nine clauses, unlike the Proklamasi, that have been the site of major challenge almost from the moment of independence. However, in terms of delineating a postcolonial vision, one of the biggest contests between the militarized postwar communities of the frontiers who had to work hard to have some small details included is precisely the real intention of those inclusions, whereas the Burmese center has persistently tried to deny the real significance of the tentative arrangements.

The Agreement begins by stating that "the members of the conference, believing that freedom will be more speedily achieved by the Shans, the Kachins and the Chins by their immediate co-operation with the Interim Burmese Government, have accordingly, and without dissentients, agreed as follows," laying out clearly that this is a

strategic maneuver to bring about the postcolonial more readily. The first five of these clauses essentially assure the Frontier Areas representatives that their involvement with the Executive Council will be guaranteed through representation as discussions for the future of the country proceed with the colonial administration and with London. However, the details in the remaining clauses reflect a fundamental rupture in the aspirations for what the postcolonial might look like in Burma. Critical was the final sentence of Clause 5, which states: "Full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas is accepted in principle." This was no more or less than the promise of Federalism, and Clause 9 also lays out some of the fiscal principles of that federal relationship within the Union. Clause 7 meanwhile states that "Citizens of the Frontier Areas shall enjoy rights and privileges which are regarded as fundamental in democratic countries." This was no Proklamasi; this was for some of the signatories a vital statement of the postcolonial vision that they hoped would materialize. Sadly, however, the commitment to this was not shared and the lack of additional details, a consequence of the need to move to agreement in principle quickly, opened up space for decades of contest over its true relevance as a defining postcolonial moment.

Clearly, there was a range of possible futures for these Frontier Areas elites and their communities at this time, but little regard has been paid to the substance of those possibilities. Rather, the narrative is that Aung San provided them with a vision of the future that was coherent and rational as well as visionary, and that without his leadership in these negotiations at Panglong, there was no positivistic notion of what a post-British future might look like. Yet even these small clauses indicate that this was not the case. In addition, a very particular clause (Clause 6), which details agreement over a thorny, but relatively specific boundary-drawing issue in the Kachin region, seems incongruous. This clause alone is indicative of the real history of the Agreement, and that it was signed as a result of hard negotiation and it effectively ended the efforts of British officials in Burma and in London to control the narrative and speed of independence. The elite politicians from the Kachin, Shan, and Chin communities who signed the agreement essentially put paid to the notion that the frontier areas were incapable of coming together with the nationalist politicians of lower Burma to forge a common future.

The Agreement has subsequently become a founding document of multiethnic Burma in the absence of any other unifying statement. Unsurprisingly, given that it is a relatively thin document, albeit one full of aspiration, it has been subject to a host of revisionist interpretations, especially given the fact that its precise intention (for ethnic signatories) of paving the way to a federal constitution that was never implemented. Most notable among these reinventions has been its historical reformulation in the public domain as a Panglong *Spirit*, which is deemed to reflect an innate harmony between all the "Races of Burma" even when their conflictual politics may suggest otherwise. Politicians of all orientations have a tendency to invoke the idea of the Panglong Spirit, especially when the political realities of building a new constitution for the country begin to be laid bare.[30] The Panglong Agreement that expressed the original modern formulation of the Panglong Spirit, therefore, is an unavoidable feature of almost any political discussion on Burma's past, present, and future aspirations for the creation of a national Union. The sticking point, of course,

is that the Panglong Agreement specifically envisaged a federal constitutional system while the reality was that this was not the future that the Burmese military—or perhaps any other regime—sought to implement. This is the crux of the problems around opposition to Burma/Myanmar's current constitutional development in which politicians at the center have refused over many years to countenance any discussion of a federal future.

The failure of the Panglong Agreement is deemed to lie at the heart of the country's slide to military rule during the 1950s, despite all the other internal dilemmas afflicting Burma's political and economic development at this time. The Agreement and its subsequent failure assumed a hegemonic dominance in defining understanding of Burma's center-periphery relations in the 1950s and their collapse by the 1960s. Detailing general notions of constitutional change it is typically assumed that the lead author of the document—its prime visionary—was Aung San himself. This feeds into the overarching narrative that perpetuates the assumption that Aung San was responsible for guiding the otherwise politically uninformed ethnic leaders present at Panglong toward a clearer understanding of their options.

However, this underestimates the degree to which these areas themselves were engaged in an active political discussion for many years before independence. As has been noted elsewhere in this volume, areas away from national centers, as we see in discussions of the radical postcolonial imaginings of intellectuals in Hyderabad, could be places full of visionary vibrancy. It is clear from archival records of conversations held with Frontier and other officials toward the end of the Second World War that a language of political change had certainly been learned in many frontier areas, and that this started before independence in the lively local debates about national and local futures. There is evidence, for example, of great interest being shown in local translations of political terms such as federalism, revolution, or yet democracy. What was also evident was that in the years leading up to independence, there was an insistence in many so-called border regions or peripheral areas that colonial officials needed to address serious questions posed to them about their future constitutional arrangements. Detailed appeals were being forwarded to colonial officials by February 1945 about political planning for the postwar reconstruction of Burma, in which local political elites were making demands of government that answers should be given concerning their political futures. The detailed petitions reflected a clear understanding of the range of possibilities using the appropriate terminology in a precise and measured way.[31] We can surmise, therefore, that despite the attempts to characterize these "tribal" elites as ill-informed and lacking political incisiveness, these were not politically naïve but were rather burgeoning politically active elite groups which had already begun to learn the political language of constitutional change. Representing them as other than this then, as now, was largely a strategic decision of the central Burmese politicians, and those of the Burma Office in Rangoon and London, for whom political discussions around independence were made more complicated if the political authenticity of the claims of ethnic communities were given the credibility that they might deserve.

So, from where did this political language emerge? How was it learned and remodeled in line with a clear understanding of how independence should unfold

away from the national center? It is worth stating that it had almost definitely not come about from direct communication with politicians representing the Burmese nationalist communities. What was notable in the lead up to independence was how disinclined the AFPFL was to engage with political discussions with any of the ethnic minority elites. Indeed, it was only at Panglong that any concrete proposals were put to non-Burmese by any Burmese politician. In this respect, the Panglong Agreement of 1947 was remarkable for the fact that it reflected a relatively short-term interaction with Aung San (and nationalist Burmese politicians) undertaken intermittently over the previous couple of months. Indeed, there seems to be some indication that even Aung San was somewhat surprised that the agreement was signed relatively straightforwardly, setting the pace of independence from Britain on a new, high-speed trajectory with key "ethnic" leaders ostensibly on board with the idea of Burma as a Union.[32]

Comparing Panglong to the Proklamasi is further complicated by its ongoing use and reuse in Burma/Myanmar. In trying to move forward toward a peace process that will produce a sustainable cessation of violence, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has invoked the memory and sense of history by presenting her vision of the Panglong Conference for the twenty-first century, which is the main public tool at her disposal for trying to build a new postcolonial moment. Yet Aung San Suu Kyi is just as guilty of perpetuating a false sense of history that politicizes the postcolonial moment for her own purposes. Remarkably reluctant to embrace the federal promise of the original agreement, her emphasis has been on the symbolic act of coming together rather than the restitution of long-broken promises. Remarkably few political leaders take a detailed interest in the study of the histories of the countries that they govern; it seems that this present government is no different in this respect either, choosing instead only the history—or the sense of history—that best suits their own purposes.

Conclusion: The problem of the postcolonial moment in independent Burma/Myanmar

Defining a moment "when" Burma became postcolonial is much more difficult than saying when it became independent. A great deal of the nationalist rhetoric of the militarized regime over so many decades has in fact been premised on the idea that colonial forces have never been entirely expunged from the country. Because they remain latent, these forces could still reemerge to undermine the country's independence and make it subservient to external powers intent on exploiting the country and its resources once more. The idiosyncratic Buddhist nationalism of the first postindependence decade, epitomized by the social and religious thought of Prime Minister U Nu (1907–1995), which later morphed into the "Burmese Way to Socialism" under General Ne Win (1911–2002), was a dominant strand of this indigenously "Burmanised" vision.[33] The early postindependence declarations of nonalignment gradually became refashioned as isolationism, as Burma sought to close its borders to the outside world to pursue its political and economic development as an independent state on its own terms. The constant threat of external powers

insinuating themselves into the fabric of the country and then lurking to undermine the country's independent status in this way meant that postcolonialism was not an event that occurred at independence but was rather a set of aspirations under perpetual challenge and requiring constant vigilance. Indeed, reducing the influence of hostile and predatory external forces that might reintroduce colonial-style external control became the primary justification of military rule over many decades: only the military could carry out this vigilance and it would do so aggressively in the interests of national defense.

In independent modern Burma, however, there was also a fear that these external forces were embodied in a range of internal foes, and especially the racial and religious minorities which became more prevalent during the period of large-scale Asian transmigration arising from imperial economic integration, being those deemed impossible to integrate (such as people of Chinese descent) or those who had married outside the Burmese-Buddhist nationalist "family" (such as Aung San Suu Kyi). In Burma, the vision of what the postcolonial should look like is therefore multilayered and deeply problematic in ways that still shape its politics.

It is also complicated by the fact that the original postcolonial moment was in some ways denied to the country at the point of independence by the assassination of General Aung San, father of modern Burma and Daw Suu Kyi alike, whose vision of the postcolonial was the main driver toward achieving independence, at least in the public memory of how that struggle was achieved. Yet, as we have seen, Burma's independence is similarly an extremely complex problem for many communities incorporated in 1948, and which have been in conflict with the national regime for decades. From what did they achieve independence in 1948 if they considered themselves already to be autonomous? Is postcolonialism of the kind aspired to by the modern Burmese state relevant to these peoples when non-Burmese communities experience Burmese state colonization more sharply than the colonization that was experienced under British rule?

Yet, it was surely not the case that those who lifted the Union flag on Independence Day, January 4, 1948, were anything other than optimists, and many of them were also visionaries and idealists, too. In Burma, as elsewhere in the region and beyond, the opportunities presented by the prospect of independence had enabled an intellectual flowering of nationalist-inspired dreams; independence itself enabled discussions about how to develop those dreams into realizable plans.[34] Although one can find many examples from the outset of forces that were later to become destructive of that early optimism, we should check our inclinations to assume that what was to unfold was the only or the inevitable outcome. The future was there for all to grasp and to shape.

Many so-called ethnic elites also expressed great optimism about the future of the federal Union of Burma at the point of independence and into the early 1950s, despite their undoubted suspicions about the real objectives of their political and military counterparts from the Burmese center.[35] They also had dreams of the future, which they now hoped to realize through concrete projects on the ground in the newly formed states and divisions of the Union of Burma.[36] Yet understanding the political aspirations and frustrations of the non-Burman politicians is even harder in many

respects than understanding those at the political center. Local state archives remain inaccessible, and the archival materials of the regional elites outside government are scattered, deteriorated, or nonexistent. If the contemporary political situation stabilizes, there may well be opportunities for gaining deeper historical insights into the events of this time. Nonetheless, having access to these official archives will not reveal everything that we may want to know. Many of the key discussions in these regions took place in settings in which no minutes were produced, in which the creation of records was deliberately avoided, and in which narrow circles of elites constituted those who needed to know in the underground cells of nascent movements of armed resistance.[37] For the most part, when trying to understand 1950s Burma from this noncentral perspective, we must disentangle past events from the process of memory construction that has been influenced by decades of subsequent experience of armed conflict in modern Burma.[38] These histories of the 1950s are particularly challenging ones to penetrate.

It is clear that there is more than this simple narrative at play in this situation. There is also a contest to redefine the postcolonial moment in Burma anew in these symbolic tensions between Aung San Suu Kyi and the civil-military regime that still clings to its power base, and the many armed ethnic organizations maneuvering against a much more powerful force. One narrative of the fragility of the "post-colonial" is owned by the military as the agent of the country's liberation. Indeed, the military regime has long identified the ongoing "colonial" threat with the actors who have placed themselves in opposition to it since 1948, and more especially from 1962. In this narrative, evidence of still-aggressive "colonial" intentions can be located ideologically in many different places, peoples, and contexts: whether in the West or yet in India and China. Yet, the threat can also be located in the "others within," such as the "indigenous" and "non-indigenous" proxies of a lingering colonial legacy. The independent state of Burma/Myanmar always has to be on its guard against the reemergence of colonialism, and the military has made use of this fear to justify both the crushing of the democratic experiment in the first decade of independence and the exclusion of Daw Aung Suu Kyi from complete power. The contest over who controls the narrative of the postcolonial moment, its meanings, and right of ownership is still playing out in Myanmar more than seven decades after the sovereign state was declared.

Notes

1 Materials available in the National Archives in Yangon for many years had a cutoff date of 1950. Access remains highly restricted for the years of military rule.

2 For some of the key texts covering these issues, see Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (London: Zed Books, 1999); Thant Myint U, *The Making of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); R. H. Taylor, *Foreign and Domestic Consequences of the KMT Intervention in Burma*, *Southeast Asia Program* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1973); R. H. Taylor, *The State in Burma* (London: C. Hurst, 1987); Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party*

of Burma, *Southeast Asia Program* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1990); Michael W. Charney, *A History of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

3 The constitution of the Union of Burma established a framework in which the main non-Burman ethnic groups/categories were identified with states and divisions bearing the same names. This suggests a degree of ethnic homogeneity both within these identifications and in the territories categorized in this way. In reality, the picture on the ground is much more complex but it is beyond the scope of this chapter. See Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Burma*; Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*; Taylor, *Foreign and Domestic Consequences of the KMT Intervention in Burma*.

4 M. Walton, "Ethnicity, Conflict and History in Burma: The Myths of Panglong." *Asian Survey* 48, no. 6 (2008): 889–910.

5 Charney, *A History of Modern Burma*, 72–91; Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 114–206.

6 Mandy Sadan, "Ethnic Armies and Ethnic Conflict in Burma: Reconsidering the History of Colonial Militarisation in the Kachin Region of Burma, 1918–1948." *South East Asia Research* 21, no. 4 (2013) 601–26. R. H. Taylor, "Colonial Forces in British Burma: A National Army Postponed," in *Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia*, eds. Karl Hack and Tobias Rettig, 195–209 (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

7 Michael Aung-Thwin, "The British 'Pacification' Of Burma: Order without Meaning." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 16, no. 2 (1985): 245–61.

8 P. Kratoska, R. Raben, and H. S. Nordholt, eds., *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005); W. van Schendel, "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20, no. 6 (2002): 647–68.

9 Michael Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier, 1852–1941* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974); Charles Hirschman, "The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology," *Sociological Forum* 1, no. 2 (1986): 330–61; Paul Kratoska, "Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 2 (1982): 280–314.

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36 For discussion in detail of these aspirations in the Kachin state, see Sadan, *Being and Becoming Kachin*. The first minister of Kachin State, the Sama Duwa Sinwa Nawng, developed his own Five-Year Plan for the economic development of the region, showing how this "grand design" style of planning, which has been referenced

elsewhere in this volume, was also a feature of the political discourse of many less central areas in the first years after independence.

37 This comment relates to experience of trying to piece together historical understanding of the 1950s in border regions, where archival materials do certainly exist, but they are typically in the ownership of individual families who are very cautious about who should see them, and many are in a greatly deteriorated condition. There have been attempts to collect and preserve these kinds of materials (such as the Burma Archives Project, which looked after many materials collected from a variety of opposition organizations in the International Institute for Social History at the University of Amsterdam). This is a matter of some urgency in relation archival preservation but the present political situation is still not stable enough to make this an easily realizable prospect.

38 In my own historical research with figures from the Kachin Independence Organisation and the Kachin Independence Army, it has proved very difficult to disentangle present politics from a discussion of contentious politics of collaboration with the Burmese state in the 1950s. Everyone is very alive to the parallels that can be made with more contemporary events.

4

The Marginal State: Practicing Islamic Statehood in Independent Indonesia

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> *The state we want is a national state consisting of all Indonesia. If we establish a state based on Islam, many areas whose population is not Islamic, such as the Moluccas, Bali, Flores, Timor, the Kai islands, and Sulawesi, will secede. And West Irian, which has not yet become part of the territory of Indonesia, will not want to be part of the Republic.*
>
> — Sukarno, January 1953[1]

From his early days in politics in the 1910s, Sukarno, first president of the Indonesian Republic, advocated for the necessity of a nonconfessional state against the demands of the religious wing of the national movement. This vision reached fulfillment on June 1, 1945, when he announced that the future independent state of Indonesia would be founded on the Pancasila, the "five principles" of nationalism, humanitarianism, deliberation among representatives, social welfare, and belief in One God. Some ten weeks later, in the aftermath of Japan's defeat in the Pacific and as the Dutch attempted to reconquer the archipelago, Sukarno proclaimed the country's independence on August 17, 1945, and renewed his commitment to the Pancasila. The speech excerpted above, delivered in South Kalimantan in January 1953, reaffirmed this priority, at the same time indicating it was being challenged by some of the nation's Muslims. Muslims wishing to see Indonesia take shape as an Islamic state had been contesting the *status quo* ever since its establishment, whether through political protests led by Islamist politicians or paramilitary actions undertaken by the Darul Islam movement in South Kalimantan (Borneo), South Sulawesi, Aceh (North Sumatra), and West Java.

In the scholarly and nationalist literature, the Darul Islam movement and the other "regional rebellions" that dotted the Indonesian archipelago in the 1940–1960s are explained as having their origins in individual leaders' crushed ambitions for power, control over economic resources, or other "local" and particularistic concerns. Analyzing the first postcolonial decade, I take a different approach. Through the example of the Darul Islam movement (with its roots in the decades before the Japanese occupation, and engagement with the early republic), I identify

four elements that characterized the process of Indonesia's independence, and which I see as pivotal to the emergence of movements antagonistic to the postcolonial state. I thus advance two arguments: first, that these movements emerged in response to the political decisions made at the center of the new government; and second, that the Darul Islam had a primarily ideological motivation for seeking separation from Sukarno's Republic.

Of the four elements mentioned above, one is to be traced to the late colonial period, while the remainder are specific to the early postcolonial era. This first element is the emphasis placed by the Dutch on collaborative politics throughout the 1930s, which exacerbated the Sarekat Islam party's policy of non-collaboration known as *hijra* (inspired by the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina in 622). Second was the 1947 invasion of West Java by the Dutch, and Sukarno's decision to negotiate a diplomatic solution which saw the Europeans taking control of considerable territory. Third was Sukarno's marginalization of Islam in the 1945 constitutional text, and his (eventually unfulfilled) promise that this approach would be revised in the future. Fourth was Sukarno's decision to transform the Indonesian federation (Republik Indonesia Serikat) into a unitary state (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia) in 1950, further alienating the religious faction that still hoped for the establishment of Islamic polities in some regions of the archipelago. Taken together, these four junctures and consequent points of fracture demonstrate the fragility of the new Republic, and the path that led to the establishment of an Islamic State of Indonesia in West Java.

Collaboration and migration

The first decade of Indonesia's postcolonial life was inevitably shaped by the late-colonial era, as the same leaders, parties, and ideologies continued to circulate with alternating fortunes. Islamic politics were first spearheaded by the Sarekat Islam. Formed in 1909 as a union of batik traders of Javanese and Arab background keen to subvert the dominance of their Chinese rivals, the association came under the guidance of Haji Omar Said Cokroaminoto in 1912. In the twenty years that followed, Sarekat Islam evolved as the first "national" organization in the Indies, with Islam functioning as a cross-ethnic and cross-island identifier.[2] Cokroaminoto's leadership was characterized by moderation and diplomacy, as evidenced by the platform announced in his booklet *Islam and Socialism*, which he published in 1924, and his role in establishing the Agreement of Indonesian People's Political Associations (Permoefakatan Perhimpoenan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia, PPPKI) with Sukarno's newly founded nationalist party in 1927.[3] But collaboration was not to remain a defining trait of Partai Sarekat Islam (PSI, to become Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia, PSII, in 1930), as upon Cokroaminoto's death in 1934, the party's leadership passed on to Haji Agus Salim and Sekarmaji Marjan Kartosuwiryo.

Kartosuwiryo was born in 1905 in Cepu, a small town between East and Central Java. He was able to receive a Dutch education by virtue of his father's position in the colonial administration. A product of the Indies' Dutch schooling and society,

Kartosuwiryo was thus a member of a new social group emerging as a result of the so-called "Ethical Policy" that had only begun to offer indigenous pupils more systematic access to Western education from 1899. Upon completion of secondary school, Kartosuwiryo was admitted to the Nederlandsch-Indische Artsen School at Surabaya. Kartosuwiryo attended this medical school until 1927, when he was expelled under uncertain circumstances, but possibly for his alleged involvement with communism. A couple of years later he started to make a name for himself as a journalist for the Sarekat Islam newspaper, *Fadjar Asia* (Dawn of Asia), where he reported news of sociopolitical relevance and wrote about religious-political issues.

It is unclear how Kartosuwiryo entered the Sarekat Islam circle, but it is likely that his interest in politics had brought him to the steps of Cokroaminoto's house while he was a student in Surabaya. Indeed, Cokroaminoto's residence famously functioned as Sarekat Islam's office in the 1910s and 1920s, and was a known hub for sociopolitical discussions. Sukarno himself had boarded there in 1915–16, and he would recall his time there as crucial to his political formation.[4] Cokroaminoto was also the link connecting him to Kartosuwiryo in those early days of political involvement, when ideological differences dissolved into a sheer desire for independence.[5]

A period of relative Dutch tolerance of nationalist activity came to an end with abortive Communist uprisings in Java and Sumatra in 1926–27, to be followed by political turmoil in the 1930s. That decade started with the appointment of a reactionary Governor General, Bonifacius Cornelis de Jonge (1875–1958), who took it upon himself to further narrow the political space of the Indies. By 1933, only those parties that openly agreed to a cooperationist path were allowed to operate. The nationalist factions meanwhile saw their leaders Sukarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir arrested multiple times with their strategies shifting between cooperation and noncooperation.

The then-declining Sarekat Islam (still PSI) also experienced much instability at this time. As he rose in the party's ranks from 1929, Kartosuwiryo became more radicalized in his commitment to noncooperation. He saw this as a two-pronged effort directed at the Dutch administration as much as at the secular nationalists. Kartosuwiryo strongly objected to the party's plan to create a united front with Sukarno's Partai Nasional Indonesia, insisting that joining the PPPKI would compromise Sarekat Islam's core values. Not only did the alliance's stress on an "Indonesian" identity clash with PSII's commitment to pan-Islamic confraternity, but PPPKI's cooperation with a despotic foreign ruler necessitated a political *hijra*, named after the original emigration of the Prophet from a hostile Mecca.[6] It is in this context, then, that the Islamic party redefined its priorities and strategies. In 1930, the new PSI statutes included a first article titled "unity in the Islamic community" deeming the unity of Indonesia's Muslims as but "a step toward the unity of the Islamic community across the world."[7] Still there was not necessarily full agreement. With Cokroaminoto's death in 1934, a power struggle between the more collaborationist Agus Salim and the "fanatical" Kartosuwiryo was reopened. In 1935–36, Agus Salim repeatedly asked the Executive Committee to revise the *hijra* policy and to allow him to rejoin the Volksraad, the token Parliament of which he had been a member in the early 1920s. Such requests went unheeded. Indeed, Salim was then ousted from his position of

power and replaced by Kartosuwiryo as head of the executive party council (*dewan partij*).

At the 1936 PSII congress, the central leadership furthermore reaffirmed its commitment to noncooperation, commissioning the *Brosoer sikap hidjrah PSII*, a short document in which Kartosuwiryo traced the roots of noncooperation to Muhammad's migration to Medina and showed its relevance to Sarekat Islam's politics, arguing for this strategy as "the best way" to advance the priorities of the community.[8] Salim continued to oppose this policy from the sidelines, condemning this strategy of conflict in a series of articles published in the periodical *Pergerakan*.[9] Ultimately in 1937, and as the *hijra* policy remained the cornerstone of Sarekat Islam's social, political, and economic efforts, Salim left the party, to be followed by a number of other prominent members.[10] To further reinforce the declining membership's consciousness of its value, the party established the *Oesaha hidjrah* committee, with Kartosuwiryo as chairman tasked to compile yet another pamphlet. The resulting *Daftar oesaha hidjrah*, printed in 1940, followed the lines of the previous booklet, though it laid out the steps for the transformation from (irreligious) "Mecca-Indonesia" to (pious) "Medina-Indonesia" in more concrete terms, and as a goal that could only be achieved through armed *jihad*.[11]

Writing the *Daftar oesaha hidjrah* was the last act for Kartosuwiryo as leader of Sarekat Islam. As relations between Kartosuwiryo and other Indonesian parties further soured due to his noncooperative stance, the board of PSII began to suspect that he had established a personalized mystical following akin to a *sufi* brotherhood. Even if it was hardly plausible, the inevitable result was Kartosuwiryo's expulsion from the party and the purging of many of his supporters, especially in West Java.[12] This move allowed for two parallel developments. On the one hand, Sarekat Islam's new leadership declared that the party had "abandoned the non-cooperation policy" resorting now to *tauhid* (unity) in the wider cooperative effort to establish an Indonesian parliament.[13] On the other hand, Kartosuwiryo was put in a position to transform his commitment to *hijra* from mere political metaphor to actual physical strategy.

In early 1940, Kartosuwiryo established his own party, the Committee for the Defense of the Truth-PSII (Komite Pertahanan Kebenaran-PSII, KPK-PSII). Headquartered in Malangbong (Garut, West Java), where his career had originally taken off, it gathered some 1,500 members from twenty-one different branches across the archipelago.[14] West Java would remain the center of Kartosuwiryo's political activities during the Japanese occupation when, interestingly, he agreed to much cooperation with the new rulers. Garut would be the political headquarters of the Darul Islam and the Islamic State of Indonesia in the 1940–1960s.

The Japanese occupation, begun in early 1942, was a formative experience for the Indonesian political leadership of all stripes. It gave it a structure, but it also fomented divisions. Although the Japanese reversed what Benedict Anderson once called the Dutch attitude of "regarding Indonesian politics as a troublesome irritation," this change did not translate in an increase in political space.[15] In fact, Japan transformed the Dutch focus on collaboration into a policy of patronage.

In the early 1940s, Indonesia's political and bureaucratic apparatuses were restructured, with the creation of broader and centralized organizations. On the one

hand, this allowed for the improvement of the pro-independence front's political skills, but on the other it also forced ideological opponents to work together under Japan's close watch. To be sure, the Japanese proved very skillful in playing factions off against each another while retaining ultimate control. At the end of 1943, for example, the official body for Muslims, the Majelis Islam A'la Indonesia (MIAI, established under the Dutch in 1937), was disbanded in favor of a new organization, the Majelis Sjoero Muslimin Indonesia (Masjoemi or, in current usage, Masyumi).[16] Whereas MIAI had been led by the Sarekat Islam Party, with the sociocultural organizations of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama playing secondary roles, the Japanese elevated leaders from Muhammadiyah and NU, thus giving the organization a less-political outlook.

Harry Benda explains this change by pointing to MIAI's increased activism and independence, marked by the establishment of a treasury for the Islamic community—the *bait al-mal*—administered by Kartosuwiryo.[17] Similarly, the formation of Jawa Hōkōkai and its military wing Barisan Pelopor (Pioneer Corps) in late 1943, and under Sukarno's leadership, tipped the balance of physical power in favor of the secular nationalists, especially as Masyumi was denied an armed wing until late 1944 when the Sabilillah and Hizboellah militias were established.

The Japanese thus mirrored in many ways De Jonge's strategy of insisting upon collaboration and subservience in exchange for political survival. Such insistence on collaboration caused splits within the anticolonial front, which, despite the proliferation of ideologies, had been able to rally together against the Dutch since the 1910s. These splits, impacting dynamics both internally to each party externally across parties, eventually created the conditions for the fragility that would characterize Indonesian politics in the early independence period.

A "temporary" constitution

Facing defeat across the Pacific, in early September 1944 the Japanese government in Java declared that Indonesia would obtain independence "in the near future."[18] As Japan steadily lost ground to the Allies, Islam once more became a feature of anti-Western propaganda. But Sukarno and the secular nationalists now dominated the realm of politics.

In April of 1945, and in an attempt at readying Indonesia for political independence, Japan had formed the Investigative Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence (Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan, BPUPKI). The Committee's main task was to create common ground for the future constitution, seeking a compromise between secular nationalists, socialists, and Islamists (many of whom identified as Islamic socialists). The negotiations heated up in May, with the religiously inclined faction pushing for the formal recognition of Islamic laws and some form of an Islamic state. However, Sukarno's Pancasila speech of June 1, which supposedly reflected the shared opinions of the Committee, only proved the dominance of the nationalist elite. In answer to ensuing complaints, the BPUPKI arranged for a subcommittee to address the concerns of the Islamic faction. Whereas

the declaration drafted by this subcommittee as the new constitutional preamble did not mention Indonesia as an Islamic state, it recognized Sharia law as an obligation for adherents of Islam. This provision would later come to be known as the Jakarta Charter.[19]

Much like the Pancasila speech, the proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, projected an image of consensus and unity, despite the fact that not all political parties had agreed on the modalities of the proclamation nor yet its contents. Soetan Sjahrir, a former ally of Sukarno and the head of the underground anti-Japanese movement, contested his acceptance of the Japanese "offer" of independence. Meanwhile, the religious wing still demanded a more prominent role for Islam. Hatta chaired a final informal meeting of the preparatory committee on August 18, but concluded that Indonesia only had a chance as an independent nation if no mention of Islam was made in the constitution.[20] The Jakarta Charter was thus scrapped from the final draft, to be replaced by a declaration of freedom of religion. To appease the representatives of Islamic parties, Sukarno qualified that this constitution was "temporary" (*sementara*), "quick" (*kilat*), and only applicable for the period of revolution. He also promised that "later in the future … if we live in a safe and orderly state, we will gather once again the elected representatives of the people, who will enable us to make a more complete and perfect constitution."[21]

This statement would remain pivotal to the political struggle of Masyumi as an Islamic party. Like Sarekat Islam under the colonial state, Masyumi conducted a propaganda campaign in favor of holy war, a policy of *hijra*, and an Islamic state.[22] This was pursued during the party's congress and on the pages of its bulletin, *al-Djihad*, which in February of 1946 observed that:

> If 33 years ago Islam was only a final coating, considered as just enough to function as a link between organizations, now it is not like that. This Masyumi has a 100% Islamic soul, the spiritual connection among all Masyumi members is Allah's religion, Masyumi's flag is the crescent and the star on a white and red background, Masyumi's aim is the *darul Islam*, or an Indonesian Republic based on Islam.[23]

In February 1946, and again in June 1947, Masyumi affirmed its commitment to establishing an Islamic state through parliamentary consultation. This was seen as a viable strategy, paired with the belief that elections to form a new constitutional assembly would be held soon after the Dutch departure.[24]

> Now Indonesia is independent, and the Republic is shaped to be based on the people's authority. Although the Constitution does not yet fulfill the desires of the Islamic community, for the time being this is enough, and we are happy and grateful. But Masyumi is aware that the majority of Indonesians are Muslims, and feels responsible for their safety and feels obliged to provide them with an Indonesian state based on Islam.[25]

So it was then that Masyumi saw the Pancasila constitution as but a stepping-stone toward the realization of an Islamic state.[26] They also envisaged the upcoming

electoral consultation as an opportunity to reopen the debate with the secular nationalists while engaging with Sukarno's politics. In June 1946, Kartosuwiryo, then member of the West Java Masyumi executive committee, shared the party's commitment to parliamentary struggle, cooperation, and unity.[27]

Despite a climate of relative peace, also sanctioned by the Linggarjati ceasefire agreement signed in November 1946 by Van Mook and the Indonesian prime minister Soetan Sjahrir, the Dutch launched a new military campaign on July 20, 1947. The targets of this attack were the areas of West Java, Madura, and Sumatra.[28] These were areas that, according to the newly minted agreement, would have been included in Sukarno's republic headquartered in Yogyakarta. This campaign had various consequences at the local, national, and international levels, but what is of relevance to the discussion at hand are its implications for West Java. Given the region was declared Dutch territory, the Republican agenda—decided upon in Yogyakarta—had become irrelevant. Indeed, the Dutch invasion of 1947 would radically change the game, pushing Kartosuwiryo to resort to a more assertive and violent strategy.

Creating an alternative: The Islamic State of West Java

The first change effected by the Dutch invasion was the disbanding of local police and the formation of Islamic militias. Faced with the prospect of being co-opted in Dutch ranks, many fighters escaped to the mountainous region of Priangan. Being a Masyumi stronghold, it did not take much for the party to absorb these soldiers in its Japanese-era militias, the Sabilillah and Hizboellah. As West Java was physically isolated from the rest of the Republican territories, Republican soldiers were often less equipped with food and weapons than the Islamic troops, and the local population came to value Masyumi as the local authority.[29]

Within this context then, Masyumi's position vis-à-vis Sukarno's Republic was increasingly strengthened. By the end of 1947, the Islamic party proclaimed the establishment of a "Sabilillah safety zone" as the first step toward an Islamic "new state" of West Java.[30] And while the Republican authorities and Masyumi should not have been in competition with each other, given they were on the same side in the anticolonial struggle, the Republic's negotiations with the Dutch and Masyumi's commitment to building an Islamic state inevitably resulted in divergent agendas. Yogyakarta and Garut seemed to be assigned to different states. The Renville Agreement, signed by the Indonesian Republic and the Dutch in January of 1948, established that most of West Java would be ruled by the Dutch, while the rest of the island would remain part of Sukarno's republic. To be sure, the Dutch invasion, the Republican withdrawal to Yogyakarta, and the Renville Agreement, had created the framework for the secession of West Java.[31]

At the time of the Dutch invasion Kartosuwiryo was vice president of Masyumi for West Java, and it was under this authority that he had coordinated a meeting to reorganize the party's regional branch in late 1947. To further mark Masyumi's new outlook—geared toward West Java's defense from Dutch attack—the Garut provincial branch of the Priangan (one of five new constellations, the other four being in Banten,

Jakarta, Bogor, and Cirebon) was renamed as the Islamic Community's Defense Council (Majelis Pertahanan Oemmat Islam, MPOI, or Dewan Pertahanan Oemmat Islam, DPOI). At the same time, the party's armed wings, including Sabilillah and Hizboellah, were merged into a single army, the Islamic Army of Indonesia (Tentara Islam Indonesia, TII). Henceforth, Garut (and the Priangan more generally) would be the headquarters of the TII and its political infrastructure, the Darul Islam/Islamic State of Indonesia (Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia, DI-NII).

With this first transformation, Kartosuwiryo sent the message to Yogyakarta that West Java needed a different platform and new strategies for the attainment of the same old goal of establishing an Islamic state. In the following months, he and his aides continued to lead West Java's political agenda through Islamic structures, at times in conversation with the Yogyakarta Republic and at times in conflict with their agents. In February 1948, some 500 delegates from five Masyumi branches (Tasikmalaya, Garut, Kuningan, Majalengka, and Ciamis), as well as representatives of other Islamic organizations, attended a conference near Cisayong, also in the Priangan. On that occasion, the activities of the West Java branch of Masyumi were suspended with the explicit aim of establishing an Islamic state and army.[32] As the official announcement declared:

> Given the political negotiations between the Republican government and the Netherlands are not yet concluded, Masyumi's sub-groups: GPII, Muslimat, GPII Putri, *fonds* Sabilillah, STII, SDII, Hizboellah, Sabilillah, and all the organization's branches, are to suspend their activities in the western part of Java beginning 1 March 1948 at 14.00.[33]

Even so, between February and March, when another conference took place in Cirebon, it became clear that Masyumi could not support the political aspirations of West Java's population in toto. The gathered Masyumi leaders therefore nominated Kartosuwiryo as *imam* of West Java's *umma*, issued a call for armed *jihad* against the Dutch, and prepared the grounds for the establishment of an Islamic law "special zone."[34] TII troops were then instructed to "reach power in a tactful way, succeed in taking control of the Republic, and include it[s territory] within the Islamic state."[35] The ultimate purpose was to prepare a *Negara Baru* (New State) as an alternative to Sukarno's republic.[36]

Competing for the state?

The Dutch occupation of West Java in the second half of 1947 had the unexpected result of freeing Kartosuwiryo from Sukarno's politics, allowing him—and West Java—to pursue a different path to independence. Certainly, scholars such as B. J. Boland and George Kahin have pointed to the developments discussed above as manifestations of Kartosuwiryo's opposition to Sukarno's Republic.[37] Equally, Indonesian historiography has repeatedly labeled the Darul Islam as an anti-Republican movement.[38] But archival sources show quite clearly that their relationship was more complicated and richer.

In fact, Kartosuwiryo initially understood the Darul Islam as being on the same side as Sukarno's Republic, rather than in opposition to it. In the aftermath to the Dutch capture of Sukarno and his cabinet, in December 1948, Kartosuwiryo even declared that the struggle for the Islamic state was "the continuation of the independence struggle, following on from and in line with the August 17, 1945 proclamation."[39] Two days after this announcement, the Islamic state renewed its "state of war" qualifying it as involving only two contenders, the NII and the Dutch government, and seemingly confirming an amicable relationship with the Republic.[40]

However, following the Dutch offensive, the Republican troops of the TNI that had previously withdrawn to Yogyakarta in March of 1948 reentered West Java—now Darul Islam territory—stirring much commotion in Islamic State circles. In January 1949, for instance, Kartosuwiryo openly accused the TNI of harvesting the fruits sown by the Darul Islam. Republican troops were returning to West Java as rulers, neither acknowledging nor respecting the fact that it had been the Islamic army who had defended the region from the Dutch after the Renville agreement had been signed.[41]

Certainly, the Islamic State saw TNI soldiers as their rivals, labeling them a "wild militia" (*tentara liar*), and an "obstacle" to the Islamic revolution.[42] By the same token, the local TNI leadership interpreted its own actions as breaching the Islamic State's sovereignty.[43] This war of words was reflected on the ground. On January 25, the TNI attacked Islamic troops in Antralina, an action that would later be recalled even in Republican circles as the day when "the TNI betrayed the Tentara Islam Indonesia."[44] In the following months, cooperation between the TNI and NII alternated with direct clashes. In April 1949, Republican troops fully joined forces with the Dutch in an attempt to clear Darul Islam pockets in West Java.[45]

This turnabout was a direct consequence of the Darul Islam's hardened approach to the Republic. In late February, Kartosuwiryo and his aides presented the TNI with an ultimatum. The TNI could either leave the region or join the ranks of the Darul Islam, but beginning in April the only army allowed to operate in the region was to be the Tentara Islam Indonesia.[46] Certainly in the months leading up to the Roem-van Royen agreement of May 1949, the Darul Islam began a process of stronger affirmation, territorially and politically. Already by mid-1948, the Darul Islam had expanded well into Central Java under the command of Amir Fatah, and groups had been established through the wider western region, in Banten, Bandung, and Bogor.[47] At the same time, West Java had been dotted with a network of "Islamic councils" (Majelis Oemmat Islam) in charge of coordinating the defense of the region and forming an Islamic mass movement dedicated to the establishment of an Islamic state.[48] During the second half of 1948, the Darul Islam asserted its control over much of the Priangan, succeeding within the short time between May and September in conquering more territory and establishing Sharia-ruled areas that united clusters of villages. Six months later, and as the Dutch and Republicans were collaborating in April–May 1949, the Darul Islam began its expansion beyond Java, sending a consul to Sumatra and developing cells across the island (including in the areas of Palembang, Bengkulu, Lampung, Jambi, and Tapanuli). At this time, too, the Dutch intercepted Darul Islam groups in South Kalimantan, the Moluccas, Sumbawa, and the Lesser Sunda Islands.[49]

On the political front, and as the Republic readied itself to accept the Roem-van Royen agreement, Kartosuwiryo renewed the understanding that West Java, as part of the Dutch-occupied territories, was not part of the Yogyakarta Republic, and thus it was not subject to any treaty signed by republican leaders. This approach was crucial to enabling Kartosuwiryo and his supporters to follow up on the previous year's issuance of the Constitution of the Islamic State and thus proclaim the establishment of the Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII) on August 7, 1949.[50]

The way that the relationship between the Islamic State and the Republic came to be articulated in the ensuing years is key for a deeper understanding of the more general attitude toward political Islam during Indonesia's long postcolonial moment. Historiographical literature addressing the early years of Indonesia's independence—largely produced between the 1950s and early 2000s—has advanced a single interpretation which unquestionably echoed the official republican narrative depicting the Darul Islam and Kartosuwiryo as enemies of the state. In these narratives, Kartosuwiryo is portrayed as a man driven by feelings of political disappointment, fanaticism, religious dogmatism, and adventurism. He is often rendered as a "fake leader" who used Islam as a tool to achieve his own political aspirations and who applied his political opportunism to rally popular support.[51] The Islamic State movement is further pictured as a terrorist group only interested in destabilizing the fledgling nation. But these narratives reflect the fact that during the postcolonial era, the writing of national history was approached as an exercise in reconstructing the past in a way functional to the nation-building process. As we saw in this section, Kartosuwiryo and the Darul Islam saw themselves as complementary to the Republic, advancing a plan of action for a specific region—West Java—which had been separated from the Republic's territory by force and then diplomacy. It was only with the Republic's return to West Java that its troops became the target of Darul Islam.

Seeking re/solution

The Darul Islam distanced itself from party politics once Kartosuwiryo severed the tie connecting the West Java branch of Masyumi to its central headquarters in Yogyakarta in February–March 1948. Yet, the Darul Islam and Masyumi retained the same ultimate goal of establishing Indonesia as an Islamic state, and in much the same way that the Darul Islam and the Republic alike were interested in expelling the Dutch. It is partly due to this double affinity that, throughout 1949 and into the early 1950s, Masyumi, the recently resurrected Sarekat Islam Party, and other like-minded politicians of an Islamist stripe, urged caution on the part of those who called for military action against the Islamic State and its stand as a "self-defense movement against the despotic actions pursued by the Dutch Army."[52]

Masyumi's initial assumption was that the Darul Islam would dissolve once the Dutch withdrew, but this was not to happen. Thus, at the congress which gathered in Yogyakarta in December 1949, the party leadership issued a resolution requesting that the Federal State form a "solution commission" that would "look for the best way to settle the Darul Islam issue and all that is linked to it."[53] The political solution was soon

endorsed by Garut's temporary government, which requested official support for the transformation of the Darul Islam into a civilian organization.[54]

The most prominent politicians attempting to reach a peaceful compromise with the Darul Islam were Vice President Mohammad Hatta and the then Minister of Defense (and Sultan of Yogyakarta), Hamengkubuwana IX. For months they had tried to reach out to Darul Islam local leaders. The Ministry of the Interior had even established a "contact commission." Between December 1948 and late 1949, Hatta sent two letters to Kartosuwiryo suggesting that the Darul Islam and the Republic should develop a common strategy of defense against the Dutch, and inviting Kartosuwiryo to be open to joining the Republic once independence was established.[55]

Once it became evident that military attacks on the Darul Islam were continuing at an increased pace, both PSII and Masyumi officially complained that the Federal government should have been more committed to a political solution.[56] The Ministry of Religion even redrafted the contact commission's member list several times, but by August 1950 nothing had been achieved.[57] Indeed, as the commission was making no progress, the Islamic parties were growing impatient and began to openly question its competency. In May 1950, Wondoamiseno, the leader of PSII, criticized the government's decision to use military force and the Army's inability to limit civilian casualties, illustrating how the Army had merely created a climate of terror. In the Priangan and the northern coast of West Java, people had stopped attending mosques for fear that soldiers would arrest anyone displaying a "pious" attitude as a potential Darul Islam member.[58] Frustrated by the government, PSII even resolved to remove all its party members from any institutional body tasked to solve the Darul Islam problem, thereby rejecting any further responsibility for the problem or for its solution.[59]

Hoping to unblock the stalemate, Masyumi leader Wali Alfatah had embarked on a mission to meet Kartosuwiryo at his headquarters. This attempt at reconciliation also failed, as Kartosuwiryo refused to meet with him, and the latter was instead captured and held prisoner for several weeks. Upon his release and return to Yogyakarta, Alfatah commented that "the *imam*" would not accept a diplomatic solution and that only military force could bring the problem to an end.[60] Indeed, calls for the "military solution" were gaining ground. Also in June, Hamengkubuwana IX traveled unofficially to the Priangan. During an interview released upon his return from Darul Islam-controlled areas, Hamengkubuwana IX stated that the Army's role was to maintain order in the country, regardless of whether the enemy included peasants, laborers, or religion itself. The TNI was then ordered to cut all supply lines to Darul Islam headquarters.[61] On June 30, 1950, the Indonesian Federal Cabinet issued a declaration, stating that while the government respected the Darul Islam's ideology as one of the political streams (*aliran*) of Indonesian politics, since the Darul Islam was causing disorder in society, the government had the duty to act to restore peace.[62]

Hopes for a political solution were briefly renewed when Masyumi leader Mohammad Natsir was appointed to form the first cabinet of the unitary state in September 1950. Even though the cabinet's first priority was internal security—a necessity that arose by the very decision to transform the Federal RIS into a unitary republic (as we shall see below)—Natsir refused to take a strong stand on the Darul

Islam. In November, he called for a general amnesty for all armed guerrillas. In this context Kartosuwiryo became more open to the Republic, reaching out to both Sukarno and Natsir to explain how political Islam was the only weapon for the Republic to fight communism.[63] Time proved that Kartosuwiryo was committed to defending the "sacred right" (*hak suci*) of the Islamic *umma* to live in an Islamic state. If the Republic was not ready to recognize the NII as an autonomous state, then he "could not be responsible for the fate of the Indonesian state and people, in front of neither the Tribunal of History, nor the Tribunal of God."[64]

Natsir's continued refusal to open a military front was interpreted by other members of parliament as a sign that Masyumi had been infiltrated by the Darul Islam.[65] Despite Natsir's rejection of such allegations, his continued soft attitude toward the Darul Islam[66] and his unwillingness to collaborate with the nationalist party PNI, caused his cabinet to fall within six months from its inception. Although the premiership remained with Masyumi, Soekiman's approach to the Darul Islam would be, at least on paper, radically different.

Federal state/Unitary state

As the Republic sought a solution to the Darul Islam "problem" in the early 1950s, other developments were enveloping the federal state. With the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch, Sukarno had formed his first cabinet as representative of the wide spectrum of Indonesian politics. This "working cabinet" included Mohammad Hatta and such aristocrats as Ide Agung Gde Agung of Bali, Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX of Yogyakarta, and Sultan Hamid II of Kalimantan. Another important characteristic of this federal cabinet was that the Indonesian Republic, headquartered at Yogyakarta and led by Sukarno, retained the majority of seats against those of the remaining sixteen states and territories.[67] As Herbert Feith once pointed out, this imbalance was to play a crucial role in the following months, as the Republic pressed the case for the dismantling of the federal structure in favor of a unitary one.[68]

Some territorial entities had already been incorporated into the Republic as early as January 1950, but it was only in March that the Hatta cabinet issued an emergency decree inviting federal states and territories to merge into the Republic of Indonesia. According to Feith, by May the cabinet had concluded that "a unitary state had to be achieved quickly."[69] Yet unification did not advance smoothly, as demonstrations ensued in both pro- and anti-unification camps, often sliding into violence. Republican propaganda was articulated with the rhetoric of rejecting the colonial legacy that had bequeathed Indonesians a heavy and confusing administrative apparatus, suppressing the spirit of nationalism that had driven the revolution and—most saliently—imposing arbitrary boundaries. The latter point decreed that the repression of the Darul Islam and other separatist movements across the archipelago was necessary for the completion of the nationalist project.[70]

Hence, between May and July of 1950, the Federal Republic and the Republic of Indonesia in Yogyakarta formed a joint committee to work on a constitutional text for the unitary state. The two cabinets' agreed on a document that appointed

Sukarno as president of the new Unitary State of Indonesia (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia) retained the Yogyakarta Republic's majority and reiterated the "temporary" character of the 1945 Constitution even as it failed to provide a timeline for elections. The parliaments were not able to approve the draft at first, however, as the West Java Pasoendan cabinet was reshuffled. Even so, the supporters of the Yogyakarta Republic eventually outnumbered pro-federation representatives by twenty members, and the new constitution was ratified.[71]

The unitary state was thus declared on August 17, 1950, exactly five years after the proclamation of independence, and thus symbolically casting the Unitary Republic as the direct legacy of the Yogyakarta Republic. The Darul Islam's response was robust. Its Information Office responded by stating that the unitary Republic was "a modern form of colonialism," both political and economic, contravening the very principles of the 1945–1949 revolution. Equally Sukarno's attempt at linking the new state to the 1945 Proclamation was cast as weak, making it "impossible for the Islamic guerrilla to surrender his weapons," for to do so would be the greatest betrayal of the Indonesian people.[72] To be sure the proclamation of a unitary state was a heavy blow to the Darul Islam, as Kartosuwiryo and his colleagues had hoped to see their Islamic State of West Java recognized within the wider federal structure.

Toward the end of Darul Islam and the postcolonial moment

Internal security was to be a trademark of all post-unification governments. And with the exception of Mohammad Natsir's short tenure, all other cabinets had to concede more space to the army in their dealings with the Darul Islam. Soekiman, who followed Natsir in April 1951, declared that his cabinet would "address the issue of security in a more resolute way, which will be felt by the people, when compared to the previous cabinet which endeavored to end the DI problem with politics."[73] Yet, he did not have the opportunity to launch an anti-Darul Islam military campaign as other, newly emerging rebellions proved more pressing. It would be another two years before the Darul Islam returned to be a priority. In his 1953 proclamation, Sukarno affirmed the importance of ending the Islamic State by any means, naming Kartosuwiryo and the Darul Islam "enemies of the state" for the first time. Ali Sastroamidjojo's cabinet, formed in July 1953, followed Sukarno's cue. Within days the Prime Minister officially called for the forceful termination of the Darul Islam "rebellion"[74] and, soon after that, First Deputy Prime Minister Wongsonegoro launched a "final operation" (*komando terakhir*) in West Java.[75]

Still, it is important to note that the first phase of this operation was aimed at "studying the enemy," hence the army's violent repression of the Darul Islam did not start until the end of the decade. There was also still notable support for its aspirations in the interim. In the lead-up to the national elections of 1955, Kasman Singodimedjo, a Masyumi cadre and former Minister of Defense, argued that the Darul Islam should not be labeled an "enemy," but rather seen as the "naughty son" who would make no progress if he were beaten to death. The state should therefore "hit" the Darul Islam with one blow "drenched in affection."[76] At the 1955 Masyumi congress, Mohamad

Roem even argued that the Darul Islam, the Islamic Army, and Daud Beureueh of Aceh were all the party's allies in the fight for an Islamic state in Indonesia.[77] Equally, Isa Anshary declared at that time that the "Ummat Islam should not support a government which is not the NII," much as K. H. Chalid Hasjim of the Nahdatul Ulama proclaimed that Muslims who did not strive for the NII were hypocrites of the *jahiliyya*, the term used for the period prior to the message of Muhammad.[78]

Indeed, as the elections approached and once Indonesia had successfully held the Bandung Conference (despite the ongoing clashes at the city's gates), the Republican government was still undecided on how to bring the Darul Islam to an end. Rejecting Ali Sastroamidjojo's approach, his Masyumi successor Burhanuddin Harahap called for a second amnesty.[79] As illustrated above, several politicians were still keen on finding a peaceful solution and reticent to engage the Darul Islam with weapons. But when called to form his second cabinet in March 1956, Ali Sastroamidjojo relented and endorsed the Army's agenda. Once again, he announced that he would end the Darul Islam with force, and this time Masyumi did not oppose the decision.[80]

As had happened many times before, however, the cabinet found itself engulfed by more pressing issues. On the one hand was the newly gathered constituent assembly's struggle (and eventual failure) to reach a consensus on the ideological foundations of the state. On the other hand were the rising discontent and tensions at the "margins" of the unitary state, especially in Aceh, West Sumatra, South Sulawesi, and the Moluccas. A military effort against the Darul Islam was coordinated only in reaction to such widespread unrest, even though there was little or no connection between the Darul Islam and the regional rebellions. The first development led to Sukarno's elaboration of his *konsepsi*—a political system ostensibly "closer to Indonesian traditions"—and the proclamation of "Guided Democracy" in early 1957. The second condition led to the proclamation of a nationwide state of war and emergency which ended Sastroamidjojo's premiership, and to the declaration of martial law in March–April 1957.

The suspension of parliamentary politics and the return to power of military officers in Jakarta and the provinces allowed for the convergence of political and military views on the "regional rebellions" in general and the Darul Islam more specifically. The order to begin "Operation Annihilate" (*Gerakan Operasi Penumpasan*) was issued in 1958. After a few months dedicated once more to studying the movement and elaborating an antiguerrilla strategy, in 1959 the West Java Siliwangi Division moved onto an "active-offensive" phase that made use of mobile units.

When it became evident that the Republican troops—including additional battalions from Central and East Java—were unable to overcome Islamic State forces, in 1960 the civilian population was forcibly co-opted to participate in the "Human Fence" operation. This name was a direct reference to its primary technique where civilians were arranged in a long line, each man standing 5–10 meters away from the other, to form a net that slowly proceeded upward from the base of the mountain, cutting supplies and isolating Darul Islam units. It goes without saying that the fence also worked as a human shield. The operations ran between December 1959 and 1965 in West and Central Java, peaking in 1962 when most of the leaders, including Kartosuwiryo, were arrested and/or executed.[81]

Yet there were other ideological challenges. It was only in the mid-1960s, with the suppression of Islamism and Communism and the ultimate end of Sukarno's "Guided Democracy" that the Indonesian nation-state entered into a stable phase, bringing a firm end by Suharto's coup to the country's visible fragility and its long postcolonial "moment."

Notes

1 Soekarno, *Antara News*, January 29, 1953, in Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), 281.

2 For different reconstructions of the origins of Sarekat Islam, see Safrizal Rambe, *Sarekat Islam: Pelopor Nasionalisme Indonesia 1905–1942* (Jakarta: Yayasan Kebangkitan Insan Cendekia, 2008), 2–3; Harry Jindrich Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958), 42; Ruth Thomas McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (1st Equinox ed.; Jakarta: Equinox, 2006), 8; R. Van Niel, *The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite* (The Hague: Van Hoeve, 1960), 90; Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadhrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900–1942* (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1999); Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 41–43; Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (London: Routledge, 2003), 167.

3 It is worth noting that Cokroaminoto had merely translated a work in English by the Indian Muslim Mushir Hosein Kidwai, who is the subject in part of Julia Stephens's chapter. See also Kevin Fogg, "Indonesian Islamic Socialism and Its South Asian Roots," *Modern Asian Studies*, forthcoming.

4 Amelz, *H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto: Hidup dan perdjuangannja*, 2 vols. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1952), I, 55.

5 Cindy Adams, *Soekarno: An Autobiography* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 272.

6 *Politiek-politioneele overzichten van Nederlandsch-Indië* [hereafter PPO], January 1930, 291, 293. The PSII Congress was held in Yogyakarta from January 24 to 27, 1930; "Verslag van het 16de congres der PSII, gehouden op Jogjakarta op den 24sten tot den 27sten Januari 1930" [1930], Archief van het Ministerie van Koloniën, 1900–1963 [hereafter AMK]: Geheime Mailrapporten [hereafter GMr], no. 230x, Het Nationaal Archief [hereafter NA], The Hague. "Verslag van de op 28 December 1930 te Batavia delegde [*sic*] vergadering der PSII" [1931], AMK GMr, no. 327x, NA; "Verslag van het 17de Congres der Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia" [1931], AMK: Kabinet Verbaal Geheim, no. 5, NA. The congress was held between 16 and 22 March 1931.

7 "Persatoean oemmat Islam se-doenia," *Fadjar Asia*, January 21, 1930. The statute was edited between October 1929 and January 1930.

8 Kartosuwiryo, "Sikap hidjrah PSII," 1936, Introduction. "De PSII brochures 'Hidjrah'" [1937], AMK GMr, no. 101x, NA.

9 *Overzicht van der Inlandsche en Maleisisch-Chineesche Pers* [hereafter *Overzicht*], August 22, 1936.

10 *Overzicht*, January 30, 1937; "Vergadering van het 'Comite Penjadar Barisan PSII' te Batavia op Februari 1937" [1937], AMK GMr, no. 227x, NA.

11 Kartosuwiryo, *Daftar oesaha hidjrah PSII bagian muqaddima* (Malangbong (SS W/L)) (Java: Poestaka Dar-oel-Islam, March 1940) in Al Chaidar, *Pemikiran politik proklamator negara Islam Indonesia S.M. Kartosoewirjo: fakta dan data sejarah Darul Islam* (Jakarta: Darul Falah, 1999), 461–76. "Pertimbangan Boekoe," *Pandji Islam* no. 36–37, September 15, 1936, 9391, indicates Daroel Oeloem as the publisher.
12 PPO, January 1939, 257. *Overzicht*, June 17, 1939.
13 *Overzicht*, February 3, 1940.
14 "Oprichting van een nieuwe politiek-godsdienstiege [*sic*] partij door het KPK-PSII" [1940], AMK GMr, no. 529x, NA.
15 Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance*, 1944–1946 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), 31.
16 "Pemboebaran MIAI," *Asia Raya*, 2 November 1943, and "Majelis Sjoera Moeslimin Indonesia," *Asia Raya*, November 23, 1943.
17 The *bayt al-māl* is a Qur'anic institution representing a communal treasury in which Qur'anic taxes are deposited, and through which the community could support those in need of financial help, such as widows, orphans, and the poor. "Gambar soesoenan baital-mal M.I.A.I.," SMIAI, 1 July 1943. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 145–46; for further details on the Japanese era *bait al-mal*, see pp. 144–47.
18 Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 173.
19 "*dengan kewadjiban mendjalankan Sjari'at Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknja*," "Piagam Jakarta Preamble to Undang-undang Dasar Republik Indonesia 1945," in *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia,* eds. Greg Fealy and Virginia Hooker (Singapore: ISEAS, 2006), 209–10. The members of the committee were Sukarno, Hatta, A.A. Maramis, Abikusno Cokrosuyoso, Abdulkahar Mudhakkir, H. Agus Salim, Achmad Soebarjo, Wahid Hasyim, and Muhammad Yamin.
20 Japan had made concessions to Islamic groups in the social and religious fields, but as the situation shifted and Japan decided to give Indonesia independence, it quickly backtracked. When it came to determining the position of Islam in the new state, Japanese officials delegated the definition to local leaders, indirectly favoring the more politically experienced secularists.
21 Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Piagam Jakarta 22 Juni 1945: Sebuah konsensus nasional tentang dasar negara Republik Indonesia 1945–1959*, 3rd edn. (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1997), 48.
22 "Revoloesi Islam," *al-Djihad* no. 24, February 13, 1946. In addition to several articles published throughout 1946 (see, for example, "Peperangan sekarang soedah djadi fardoel 'ain,'" April 20), the magazine also published boxes advertising slogans such as *SIAP sedia untuk berdjuang fiSabilillah*, *Djihad Sabil*, *Daroel Islam itoelah toedjoean kita*, *Berdjihadlah! FiSabilillah!*
23 "Masjoemi, toelang poenggoeng Republik Indonesia," *al-Djihad* no. 26, February 28, 1946. This was also reported with concern by Dutch sources. See *ANP-Aneta Bulletin*, "Kentering in de Masoemi in Indische," Documentatie dienst van ANP-Aneta October 10 December 27, 1946, 423–27.
24 "Rencana dari Masjoemi," June 20, 1947, Arsip Kementrian Pertahanan 1946, no. 1045, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia [hereafter ANRI], Jakarta.
25 "Gemeene Be(e)st kita sabil! Masjoemi haroes djadi Chalifah di Indonesia," *al-Djihad* no. 26, February 28, 1946. The Congress was held in Solo on February 13 and 14, 1946.
26 Deliar Noer, *Masjumi: Its Organization, Ideology and Political Role in Indonesia* (MA thesis, Ithaca, Cornell University, 1960), 70–75.

27 Kartosuwiryo, *Haloean Politik Islam* (Garut: Dewan Penerangan Masjoemi, 1946).
28 "Bataljion genietropen Oorlogsdagboek nr: B149/101.34," Ministerie van Defensie [hereafter MD]: Archieven Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië [hereafter AS], no. 2231, NA.
29 For a detailed account of the consequences of the Dutch invasion of Java, see Chiara Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012), 98–101.
30 "Laporan tentang keadaan didaerah Tasikmalaya Utara," December 23, 1947, Arsip Kepolisian Negara 1947–1949, no. 495, ANRI.
31 "Situation in Indonesia truce agreement and 'Renville' principles, Consul-General Shepherd to Mr. Bevin," in Correspondence part 2 January to December 1948, p. 3 onwards, Foreign Office FO 480/2, National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.
32 Dinas Sedjarah TNI, *Penumpasan pemberontakan D.I./T.I.I., S.M. Kartosuwiryo di Jawa Barat* (Bandung: Dinas Sejarah Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Darat, 1982 [1974]), 59–65; Dani Wahdani, "Politik militer Angkatan Perang Negara Islam Indonesia (A.P.N.I.I.) di Jawa Barat pimpinan Imam S.M. Kartosoewirjo," (Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Jatinangor, 2003), 59. quoting from *Sedjarah Goenoeng Tjoepoe*.
33 "Dunia Masyumi menghentikan usahanya," March 1, 1948 in "Pelaporan No. 14/7/48 Perihal 'Darul Islam'," Jawatan Kepolisian Negara Bagian PAM Yogyakarta, July 17, 1948, Arsip Jogja Documenten 1946–1948 [hereafter JogjaDoc], no. 218h, ANRI.
34 "Overzicht en Ontwikkeling van de Toestand April 8, 1800 uur tot April 15, 1800 uur," Territorial ts. Tropencommandant West Java [1948], MD: AS no. 2224, NA. "Rencana ketenteraan oemmat Islam," in JogjaDoc no. 218h, ANRI.
35 "Dunia Masyumi," in JogjaDoc no. 218h, ANRI.
36 "Program politik ummat Islam," in JogjaDoc no. 218h, ANRI.
37 George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2003 [1952]), 330; Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 58.
38 For an illustration of this phenomenon, see Chiara Formichi, "Re-Writing the History of Political Islam in Indonesia." *Sojourn* 30, no. 1 (2015): 105–40.
39 "Maklumat Negara Islam Indonesia no. 6," 20 Safar 1368 AH/21 December 1948 CE, in Al Chaidar, *Pemikiran politik* 556–57.
40 "Maklumat Negara Islam Indonesia no. 7," 22 Safar 1368 AH/23 December 1948 CE, in Al Chaidar, *Pemikiran politik*, 558–59.
41 "Maklumat no. 10 Siliwangi Djawa Barat," April 10, 1949.
42 "Maklumat Negara Islam Indonesia Militer no. 1," January 25, 1949, in Al Chaidar, *Pemikiran politik*, 652–54.
43 Penumpasan DI-JaBar, [folii], Arsip Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia [hereafter AABRI DI], no. 4, Jakarta. (*Kedatangan Tentara kita dianggap sebagai melanggar kedaulatan negara tsb* [NII] *berhubung memang Tentara kita bertugas untuk membangun kembali Pemerintah republik di Jawa Barat*.)
44 "Tanggal2 bersedjarah bagi Gerombolan D.I." [1952?], AABRI DI no. 14. (*TNI melakukan penghianatan kepada Tentara Islam Indonesia*.)
45 "Beknopt Politiek-Politioneel Verslag over de maand April 1949 van de regentschappen in de Negara Pasundan," AMK:RI no. 258, NA.
46 Ibid.

47 "Rapport," Politie Bantam, October 8, 1949, Archief van de Procureur-Generaal [hereafter APG], no. 998, NA. "Tentara Islam Indonesia," August 17, 1948, APG no. 1002, NA. "CMI Signalement: de verhouding tussen Wali Negara van Pasoendan Wiranatakoesoema en de Daroel-Islam," March 1949, Archief van de Algemene Secretarie, 1944–1950 [hereafter AAS], no. 3979, NA.
48 "Qanun asasy Negara Islam Indonesia," AABRI DI no. 9.
49 "Tanggal2 bersendjarah bagi Gerombolan D.I." [1952?], AABRI DI no. 14. "CMI Signalement de Negara Islam Indonesia," October 21, 1949, AAS no. 3979, NA.
50 "Qanun Asasy Negara Islam Indonesia," AABRI DI no. 9; "Proklamasi berdirinja Negara Islam Indonesia," August 7, 1949, AABRI DI no. 14. For more on the Islamic State of Indonesia, see Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation*, 109–43.
51 *Kementerian Penerangan, Republik Indonesia: Propinsi Djawa Barat* (Jakarta: Kementerian Penerangan, 1953), 218, 234–35.
52 "Membesarkan berita D.I. untuk keuntungan politik," *Harian Berita*, September 21, 1949.
53 "Resolusi Kongres Masjumi tentang DI," *Warta Indonesia*, December 22, 1949.
54 "Mosi badan perwakilan sementara Kapubaten Garut," January 7, 1950, Kabinet Presiden Republik Indonesia Serikat 1949–1950 [hereafter RIS], no. 85, ANRI.
55 "Ichtisar gerakan DI/Kartosuwiryo," Kemeterian Dalam Negeri Yogyakarta, July 24, 1950, Kabinet Perdana Menteri RI, Yogyakarta, 1949–1950 [hereafter KabPerd], no. 150, ANRI.
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57 An early draft of the members of the committee was prepared by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (June 11, 1950), but subsequent drafts (July 8 and August 8 1950) show the (attempted) collaboration of the ministries of Domestic Affairs, Religious Affairs, Information, and Social Affairs. KabPerd no. 150, ANRI.
58 "Kutipan pertanjaan-pertanjaan anggauta-anggauta badan pekerdja Komite Nasional Pusat kepada Pemerintah untuk didjawab pada harti-pertanjaan sidang ke-V tahun 1950; mengenai kementerian dalam negeri, dari anggauta W. Wondoamiseno (PSII)," KabPerd no. 150, ANRI.
59 "Sikap PSII terhadap penjelesaian soal Darul Islam," May 4, 1950, RIS no. 107, ANRI.
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61 "Ichtisar gerakan DI/Kartosuwiryo," Kemeterian Dalam Negeri Yogyakarta, July 24, 1950, KabPerd no. 150, ANRI.
62 "Ichtisar gerakan DI/Kartosuwiryo," Kemeterian Dalam Negeri Yogyakarta, July 24, 1950, KabPerd no. 150, ANRI; "Statement Masjumi tentang perisitiwa 'Darul Islam'," Ketua Dewan Pimpinan Partai Masjumi Moh. Natsir, April 23, 1950, KabPerd no. 150, ANRI; "Sikap PSII terhadap penjelesaian soal Darul Islam," May 4, 1950, RIS no. 107, ANRI; "Soal Darul Islam dan pembersihan jang telah diadakan," Menteri Pertahanan RIS, May 8, 1950, KabPerd no. 150, ANRI.
63 "Nota Rahasia" from Kartosuwiryo to Soekarno, October 22, 1950, in Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, 244–49.
64 "Nota Rahasia kedua" from Kartosuwiryo to Soekarno, February 17, 1951, in Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, 250–55.

65 "Masjumi tidak di-Infiltrasi oleh Darul Islam," *Berita Masjumi,* January 12, 1951; "Tentang infiltrasi DI dalam Masjumi" and "Masjumi Garut dibekukan," *Berita Masjumi*, January 19, 1951.

66 Mohammad Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, 3 vols. (Jakarta: Abadi-Yayasan Capita Selecta, 2008), II, 48–50, 66–68, 230–35, 272–74, 275, 331, 340–45, 371–72, 381–82, 392–98, 422–23; III, 26. These articles and speeches were delivered between May 12, 1951, and November 11, 1956.

67 East Indonesia held the Home Affairs and Information seats, Pasoendan had the seat for Social Affairs, while West Borneo had one minister without portfolio. The remaining eleven seats were occupied by Republican ministers.

68 Feith, *The Decline*, 46–100.

69 Ibid., 68.

70 It is important to note that several other regions continued to fight for their autonomy until the mid-1960s, if not later. For more on other "regional rebellions," see Cornelis van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*, KITLV Verhandelingen, no. 94 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981). On South Sulawesi, see Barbara Sillars Harvey, "Tradition, Islam and Rebellion, South Sulawesi 1905–1965" (PhD, Cornell University, 1974); Barbara Sillars Harvey, *Permesta: Half a Rebellion* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University Press, 1977); Esther Velthoen, "*Hutan* and *Kota*: Contested Visions of the Nation-State in Southern Sulawesi in the 1950s" in *Indonesia in Transition: Rethinking 'Civil Society', 'Region' and 'Crisis'* eds. Hanneman Samuel and Henk Schulte Nordholt (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004), 147–74. For Aceh, see Ed Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*: *Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009). On West Sumatra, see Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity, 1926–1998* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999).

71 Feith, *The Decline*, 46–99.

72 "Sambutan seruan PR Bung Karno (Presiden) pd.tg. August 17, 1950 tentang: 'Bersatu Kembali' jg. disiarkan oleh Kementerian Penerangan RI," Jawatan Penerangan NII daerah Pekalongan, RIS no. 131, ANRI.

73 "Soal DI: suatu bagian dari masalah gerilla," *Berita Masjumi*, May 16, 1951.

74 The first documented use of the term "rebellion" to describe the Darul Islam is in "Pendjelasan singkat mengenai 1. Program Kabinet RIK tentang keamanan, 2. Pidato Presiden RIK, menjambut peringatan Proklamasi, Agoestus 17, 1945." Colonel S. Mughny TII, 1953, AABRI DI no. 10.

75 Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, II, 48–49.

76 "DI anaknja, Masjumi ajahnja," *Harian Ra'jat*, September 20, 1955.

77 *Harian Ra'jat*, September 26, 1955, in Muhammad Isa Ansyori, "Respons Masyumi terhadap gerakan Darul Islam di Jawa Barat (1949–1960)" (Universitas Pajadjaran, Jatinangor, 2007), 87.

78 "Berkas mengenai Negara Islam Indonesia, Mazuki Arifin no. 366," in *Gerakan separatisme Indonesia tahun 1945–1965* (Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2003), 36–37.

79 *Harian Ra'jat*, August 13, 1955, in Muhammad Isa Ansyori, *Respons Masyumi*, 86.

80 *Harian Ra'jat*, March 12, 1956, in Ansyori, *Respons Masyumi*, p. 88. It ought to be noted that regardless of these statements, this cabinet was particularly inconsequential on several fronts.

81 Dinas Sejarah TNI, *Penumpasan pemberontakan D.I./T.I.I.*, 124–25; details on the human fence operation are from Van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam*, 124–25.

5

Evacuee Property and the Management of Economic Life in Postcolonial India

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The sexologist and the city

Dr. N. H. Naro was a specialist in venereal diseases and sexual disorders and ran a successful dispensary in Bombay through the early 1940s. In 1946, in order to increase his business he hired an advertising agency called UN Publicity Services. It's difficult to gauge the impact the campaign had on his business, but Naro was disappointed and refused to pay UN Publicity. Like many other breaches of contracts, this dispute too went to civil court and Naro agreed via a settlement on June 13, 1949, to repay the amount in monthly installments. Defaulting in these payments would lead to his dispensary, and all furniture and articles therein as well as the "goodwill" attached to the dispensary would be sold to recover these costs. Naro was also made to create a charge that he would not sell or mortgage this property till his debt was settled. A month after the settlement Naro decided to move his practice to Karachi and through his agent conveyed possession of his dispensary, its furniture, and his tenancy rights to the owner of UN Publicity Services.[1]

Ordinarily, this would be an unremarkable event among the landscape of commercial transactions in Bombay except that the city that Naro moved to was the capital of the new state of Pakistan, formed by partitioning the territories of British India. On moving to Pakistan with an intention of settling there, Naro was declared an "evacuee" by the Indian government, and his property including the dispensary and attached rights were taken over by the newly created office of the Custodian of Evacuee Property. UN Publicity Services was denied access to the dispensary and despite the court order and legal documentation was confronted with a bad debt arising out of unforeseen circumstances.

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Partition, economy, and property

The Partition of British India was one of the most cataclysmic events of the twentieth century. Communal violence and riots that accompanied the Partition led to the deaths of 1.5 million people and displaced 14 million others, making it the largest mass migration in human history.[2] Partition's impact continues to shape politics till date, be it empowering military-bureaucratic authorities in Pakistan or defining the rights of minorities in India.[3] Amid this scale of transformation what insights can the comparatively trivial affair of Naro's dispensary offer about the Partition?

This chapter engages with cases like Naro to bring the economy back to the studies of Partition and demonstrate that the Office of the Custodian of Evacuee Property was a key site through which the postcolonial state learnt now to operate new economic technologies of rule. The unique combination of powers enjoyed by the Custodian made it a significant site for transforming the democratic postcolonial economy into an object of governance. As UN Publicities' unexpected losses suggest, the Custodian's office affected not just individuals who moved but also the lives of the majority that stayed.

While there is now a robust body of scholarship on the Partition, the focus has almost unfailingly remained on the question of politics.[4] This ranges from high politics of Partition negotiations,[5] the intellectual and ideological origins of Partition,[6] the provincial politics that drove it,[7] to how ordinary people lived and remembered the effects of these politics.[8] More recent works have suggested that the Partition, the movement of refugees, and the pressures generated continue to shape state practices over citizenship, identity documents, and passports in South Asia.[9]

However, the Partition's impact on the economy or economic life remains absent or marginal to these narratives.[10] The desire for economic opportunities might feature as a motive for migration, the destitution as a result of Partition may be identified as a cause for refugee mobilization, but the economy or economic life has not been the focus of Partition historiography. The leading study on economic consequences of the Partition remains a collection of articles commissioned by the University of Bombay in 1950.[11]

Through an engagement with the archive of evacuee law and regulations, I want to integrate the Partition, which is studied as an exceptional event, with the longue durée processes of statemaking. In doing so, I want to specifically take up Joya Chatterji's invitation to use the regime of evacuee property to connect the Partition with the "broader history of state formation, constitution making and the history of laws."[12]

The Custodian of Evacuee Property remains an understudied institution, despite its seeming omniscience in the first decade after Partition. As the disputes between India and Pakistan escalated, both countries made their cases internationally through a series of pamphlets and communiques.[13] Other countries turned to evacuee property regime as a model for dealing with their own issues of displacement. Israel instructed its consul in Bombay to forward all materials concerning evacuee property law and would later cite it as precedent for the Absentee Property Law's in Israel, which allowed the expropriation of Arab-owned property.[14] The activities of the Custodian

were covered extensively in the press, and they cast a shadow over the popular culture. The loss of the family home to the Custodian is a central plot device in M. S. Sathyu's classic 1973 film *Garam Hava* (Scorching Winds), which examines the plight of a North Indian Muslim family that stays on in India after the Partition.

Despite both the official and popular memories of evacuee property, there was no scholarly attention paid to the topic till Vazira Zamindar's intervention in 2007. She argues that the partition of India and Pakistan was a long process of demarcation of borders and citizenship involving both physical and bureaucratic violence. Offices like the Custodian of Evacuee Property imposed fixed national categories on the multiple affiliations South Asians enjoyed by requiring demonstrations of loyalty, disguising the expropriation of minority owner property, and compelling minorities to migrate.[15] Rotem Geva builds on this to show that the low bureaucratic politics of administering evacuee property were inextricably linked with high politics and not external to it.[16]

On the Pakistani side, where there was larger quantity of evacuee property, Ilyas. Chatha shows that the redistribution of evacuee property in West Pakistan played a role in institutionalizing corruption, as politicians, bureaucrats, local elites, and enterprising refugees all sought to corner lucrative property often through false claims, illegal occupations, and personal contacts. This extremely public competition for resources created a "discourse of corruption" and resentments which would provide an excuse for military intervention.[17] Chatha joins a growing interest among Partition scholars in active role played by refugees and lower-ranking officials in shaping the policies that affected them, suggesting the processes of Partition were equally shaped from forces below.[18]

Despite this emerging interest in evacuee property, the focus has remained on urban homes in the states that were directly affected by the Partition, and even within that there is a considerable bias toward Delhi and Sindh. With the passing of the central legislations in 1950, evacuee property law became potentially applicable to all areas including those that had not witnessed Partition violence. I argue that the new landscape of evacuee property law included the entire territory of India where it was applicable, including far-flung provinces like Madras and former princely states like Bhopal. It also encompassed a greater field of property by looking at agricultural property, movable property, and intangible economic assets like goodwill and inheritance rights.

Secondly, evacuee property has been *seen as a product of the partition*, in some ways an exceptional event in South Asian history. I will argue that the strategies formed in evacuee property, that is, creating an exceptional regime of laws to expropriate property, became the basis of the constitutional order and shaped the Indian state's more quotidian engagements of acquiring land for land reforms, managing economic life or setting up developmental projects.

Third, the emphasis has been on how evacuee property laws affected mobile populations, particularly minorities who were being deprived of their property. However, this chapter will show that evacuee property law allowed the state to also enter the lives of nonmigrants and members of the majority community who were not thought to have been affected by the Partition, and examine a variety of strategies adopted by citizens to negotiate with this new authority.

Fourth, the office and its powers caused anxieties not only for citizens who were subject to its authority but also the state that it was a part of. The Custodian's office was a *quasi-judicial* body located within the bureaucracy but was virtually autonomous being answerable to neither political masters nor the judiciary. As the title of the chapter suggests, this will close by examining efforts of both citizens and the state to "tame the custodian" and make the office more manageable. Unsurprisingly, the records of the Custodian, with a few exceptions, have not been declassified.[19]

The chapter begins with mapping the how evacuee property law transformed from a wartime emergency law in a colonial state to a permanent authority for a democratic republic through its engagement with the "economy." It then examines, in turn, the Office of the Custodian as a site for expanding state intervention in the economy, the Office as a site for resistance and creative strategies by ordinary citizens, and, finally, the Office as a site of anxiety within the state itself.

Evacuee property: From emergency measures to national resource

What was evacuee property? The scale and unforeseen nature of the migration in 1947 led to families abandoning vast tracts of land and property while fleeing to security. The exact figures of property abandoned have still not been arrived at. In 1957, the Indian government, after verifying claims by refugees, estimated that about five billion rupees ($1.5 billion in 1955) worth of urban immovable property had been left behind in West Pakistan.[20] This is a conservative estimate; not only did it not account for agricultural land or movable property, but it also did not address property left behind in East Pakistan. The method of valuation itself was much debated, and the figures were based on property tax receipts from the early 1940s which would have undervalued.[21] A government of Pakistan circular recorded that that the urban property left behind by non-Muslims in Pakistan included 313,132 houses, 131,084 shops, 75,857 building sites, 3,189 small industrial concerns and workshops, and 849 big industries. The property left behind by Muslims in India is harder to estimate, but we get a sense from the figures for Delhi in 1948 that show 12,512 homes, 3,866 business premises, and 420 factories had been left behind.[22]

Abandoned properties did not stay abandoned. Many were broken into and forcibly occupied by refugees arriving destitute to the new countries. Other properties were quietly usurped by neighbors who were looking to make financial gains at the expense of the departing migrants. Particularly pernicious were situations when members from minority communities who temporarily left their homes and businesses to find security in another part of the city would return to find their homes broken into and occupied by others.[23]

In the immediate weeks following the Partition, the governments of India and Pakistan made a joint effort to settle the property interests of refugees. Declaring that the "illegal seizure of property" would not be recognized, they agreed to appoint a Custodian of Refugee Property who would protect property left behind. Believing that the sudden flight of people was temporary, the principal aim was to ensure the property would be restored to the refugees once they returned.

The initial legal arrangements in East and West Punjab provided for the appointment of a Custodian of Evacuee Property, who was empowered to take possession of the property and effects of evacuees, that is, any person who was ordinarily a resident who had left the area on a certain date without appointing any person to protect his or her property. The aim remained the unconditional restoration of property to the returning refugee and focused only on abandoned property and not situations where the owner had herself arranged for its protection. As historians have noted, neither government in the early months imagined that Partition would lead to such a great migration of people or such accompanying violence and bitterness.[24] The shift in the designation from "refugee property" to "evacuee property" after the Second World War is significant, given that evacuation was seen as a more temporary phenomenon (when an individual is removed from danger).[25] The laws of evacuee property had been designed to preserve status quo and restore the property to their original owners after the conflict, but over the next three years the nature of the problem changed and the cooperation between the two states broke down.

As the numbers of migrants continued to swell and the Pakistani state introduced a new ordinance for the "economic rehabilitation of West Punjab" that allowed the state to "assume, possession or control of abandoned lands, businesses and undertakings; and grant temporary leases of abandoned agricultural lands and homes to refugees."[26] This was to legitimize ground realities, state officials had faced fierce resistance from refugees when they tried to make them leave homes and lands that they were squatting on. The issue was also forced by the imbalances between the quantum of property left behind and the number of migrants. Non-Muslim evacuees from West Pakistan left behind more property in Pakistan than Muslim evacuees did in India. The presence of Hindu and Sikh landlords in Muslim majority provinces that formed Pakistan had exacerbated communal conflict and shaped demands for Partition in the first place. Non-Muslims also made up a greater proportion of the urban population in West Pakistan than Muslims did in India. While both countries contested the final figures, they conceded that around 5.5. million acres of agricultural lands were vacated by Muslims in North India as opposed to the 67 million acres of land left behind by non-Muslims in West Punjab alone. The Pakistani state was soon overwhelmed by migrants who were demanding both rewards and compensation for sacrifices made in moving to the new state, and evacuee properties were seen as the base for rehabilitation.

These pressures soon led to competitive regulations in both India and Pakistan exercising greater control over evacuee property. The West Punjab ordinance was amended to now consider as evacuee property any property that the owner could not *personally* occupy or supervise, or the assets of any corporation that either wholly or even partially ceased to function because of the "disturbances." For instance, even if the owner remained in Pakistan and had to shut down his factory because of violence, the property was liable to be declared evacuee property. The law did not recognize the possibility of such property being managed by a representative or a relative and by December 1947, another ordinance held that the transfer of rights over "evacuee property" would not be recognized.[27] This meant that non-Muslim evacuees lost the option of selling or leasing their property before moving, effectively stripping

them of all assets. The government proceeded to lay down rules which required the Custodian to take into consideration the following objects, including the resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees, to facilitate the rehabilitation of *economic life of a province*, and to maintain the stability of the currency and credit system.[28] The phrase "economic life of a province" is an interesting construction, suggesting that a substate entity recently formed by administrative fiat could have a "life" that the administration was bound to preserve. Even when transfers were recognized, the Custodian in Punjab was empowered to refuse them if they violated these objectives. The subject of evacuee property swiftly shifted from being individual property owners who had to be housed and compensated to the "economy" as an object of governance itself. Historians have argued that the "economy" as we understand it today is a recent product of socio-technical practice, shifting from a way of exercising power and accumulating knowledge to an object of power and knowledge.[29] In India the economy had been marked as a subject to law by the late nineteenth century; however, it was the wartime state that managed to enter all economic transactions. Economic life of India mattered as it needed to sustain the war front in Asia.[30]

Across the border, the East Punjab government hastened to expand the definitions of evacuee and evacuee property to match the changes brought by Pakistan and also included all property in which an evacuee might have a right or interest too, including cash deposits and contents of bank lockers.[31] The conception of "property" was expanded to include a range of economic interests. The restoration of property to their original owners while technically permitted became increasingly circumspect as a practice. The West Punjab government gave the Custodian the right to refuse restoration if it hampered the rehabilitation of refugees or the recovery of "economic life" in the province.[32]

In India, this refusal was compounded by the feeling that many more Muslims were returning to India after Partition than non-Muslims went back to Pakistan. Constituent Assembly members in Punjab made emotional speeches stating that by returning the evacuee properties to their original owners they would be dispossessing the refugees who had been settled in them, twice over.[33] The Indian parliament enacted a series of orders controlling the "influx" of Muslims from Pakistan and introducing a permit system to control the movement of persons.[34] It became clear that the question of evacuee property could no longer be settled at the provincial level, and the two central governments sought to settle the issue through diplomatic negotiations.

There were four interdominion conferences held over ten years that sought to address the questions of evacuee property. Historians of the Partition have argued that these negotiations were based on the needs of the two dominions to assert themselves as sovereign states on the international plane and often focused on disentangling themselves from each other.[35] On the question of evacuee property, these negotiations also allowed the states to declare sovereignty internally by emerging as a representative of a fluid population, and declaring eminent domain over such property. Noting the messiness of individual transactions, the states decided in principle that all agricultural property would be acquired by the state in which they were located at "fair value," which would be paid in the form of bonds to the state

where the evacuees had gone. Both Pakistan and India could then devise their own methods of distributing this compensation to the evacuees. Thus, in effect, ownership and transfer of evacuee agricultural property was to be between two sovereign states as opposed to individuals.

In urban property, evacuees still had to be directly compensated when their properties were acquired permanently or requisitioned temporarily for economic and refugee rehabilitation. Urban property owners would be allowed to exchange or sell their property, but such transactions had to be registered in the presence of the Custodian of Evacuee Property and required extensive documentation on taxes. In practice, this disadvantaged small property owners (who made up over 70 percent of all property) who did not have the resources to sell or exchange the property in a city that was hostile to them. Sales often fell through because there was pressure on local buyers to not purchase properties from evacuees, in effect forcing the evacuees to abandon it instead.

Movable property and bank assets were to be restored to the original owners upon application, unless such property was needed for the "life of the community."[36] All these processes mandated the setting up of a coordinated bureaucracy that would exchange revenue records, register sales, organize rent of property before sales, and help return movable property.

There remained a serious difference of opinion on the valuation of property with India insisting that the values be based on the land and revenue records and the Pakistani government insisting it follow the current market price. The agreement soon broke down, with the Pakistan government dramatically reducing the revenue valuations of agricultural land and reducing rents on urban property by 80 percent on the grounds that the Muslim refugees were impoverished and demoralized and it would be impossible to collect the pre-Partition rents.[37] The Indian government refused to accept this and demanded rents at the full value of property left behind before the Partition and not an estimate fixed by the Government of Pakistan.

The failure of a bilateral approach and the pressures by refugee leaders in India led the Indian government to enact a unilateral law to deal with the question of evacuee property.[38] The new legislation stating that it sought to preserve evacuee property applied the Indian regulations to the entire territory of India, with the exception of the eastern provinces. It also broadened the category of evacuee's to include the "intending evacuee."[39] The "intending evacuee" was an individual who the Custodian had reason to believe was planning to migrate to Pakistan, and while this intention was being determined the custodian had the powers to attach all their property. The Indian government claimed that they were merely formalizing practices that were already being carried out in Pakistan, where the Custodian was serving notices on non-Muslim firms and businesses on the grounds that they were likely to migrate to India.

As we shall see later in this chapter, there were several factors that could trigger the suspicion of an intending evacuee. These could include a visit to Pakistan, the transfer of funds or assets there, or the movement of family members. The Custodian was given the powers to make such determination which would include cross examining witnesses, summoning account statements and travel documents and prevent the

transfer of any money to Pakistan.[40] The Custodian emerged as a unique self-contained authority, the policeman doing the investigation, the prosecution, the trial, and the appellate judge. While some of the powers mirrored that of other wartime economic bureaucrats, such as the Controller of Rice or Cotton Textiles, their functions were limited to one particular commodity or system of production, while the Custodian to enter into any area of life.[41] Many Indian Muslims who had close family or business contacts on the other side of the border found themselves drawing the attention of the Custodian's office and having to prove their intention to remain within the Indian state.

By 1951, both India and Pakistan had enacted an exceptional regime of law to deal with property held by its minority citizens and authorized a powerful office of the Custodian to manage it. It soon became clear that property interests could not be easily entangled, and the Indian state passed the Evacuee Interest Separation Act which empowered the custodian to entangle evacuee and non-evacuee interests.[42] For instance, if a house was owned jointly by three brothers, in the case of one leaving for Pakistan the Custodian could declare his share of the house to be evacuee property and sell or rent it out. Alternatively, if some shareholders of a private corporation migrated to Pakistan, the state could step into the management structure of the company. The Custodian's office was suddenly able to enter the bedrooms and boardrooms of thousands of its minority citizens. In an iconic scene in the film *Garam Hava*, the nonagenarian matriarch, on being told that she will be evicted on orders of the Custodian, wails, "I had only two sons, who is this bastard Custodian who is now demanding a share of our house."

Emergencies, evacuee property, and land reform

From their inception, evacuee property laws were seen as time-bound, a temporary situation to cope with an extraordinary event. Their main precedent was the British Trading with the Enemy Acts of 1917 and 1939, which empowered the Custodian of Enemy Property to acquire property of those defined as enemies (often German nationals). The emphasis was to prevent such property being used to defeat British war objectives. The idea was that the property would "vest" for the duration of the conflict and would be resolved on the conclusion of peace. This was not seen as permanent confiscation.[43]

The earliest regulations on evacuee property were also products of wartime legislations, framed under powers granted by the Defence of India Act of 1939, which had given the central governments wide powers to issue ordinances avoiding both legislatures and courts to meet the needs of an emergency.

However, by 1949, the question of evacuee property was being viewed not as a temporary measure but as part of a more permanent state of affairs, thus normalizing the exceptional regime of laws. The continuation of wartime emergency powers to manage the economy was not unique to evacuee property, as the government sought to continue wartime rationing of commodities and controls over prices as well.[44] However, evacuee property received a higher degree of protection from external

interference. The constitutions of both India and Pakistan treated "evacuee property" as a special category that was exempted from the constitutional guarantee of the right to property and could be acquired without compensation to the owners.[45] The Pakistani constitution largely mirrored the changes in the Indian constitution and stated that any law relating to the administration and acquisition of evacuee property would be exempted from the constitutional requirements for compensation for property compulsorily acquired.[46]

The question of expropriation of property was one of only two occasions within the Constituent Assembly that had broken down. While a majority of members agreed that the right to property could not be absolute, there was a significant divide on what the quantum of compensation would be and whether the amount could be challenged in the courts. The debates were extensive and finally led to the principle of compensation being enshrined to the constitution.[47] Evacuee property was added as an exception to this principle with almost no debate. Unlike the zamindars, or small farmers, whose property interests found advocates in the Constitution Assembly, the "evacuees" had no voice. As the member from Punjab, Jaspat Roy Kapoor, reminded the house, that if the negotiations with the Pakistanis had failed, the Indian state had an obligation to compensate the refugees for the property they had left behind and this required at the very least the appropriation of evacuee property.[48] When debating the possibility of restoring the property to returning evacuees, Roy Kapoor noted that "while it was good to be generous, generosity loses much of its virtue when it is at the cost of others … our refugee brethren."[49]

The lack of consensus over the state's ability to expropriate private property had impeded government's plans for land reforms. The Congress-led governments in several states sought to enact land and tenancy reform and abolish the big aristocratic estates, but they were repeatedly confounded with legal challenges under the right to property or claiming inadequate compensation. The first two decades of independence were marked by extensive litigation and exhaustion of political capital over the constitutionality of the land reform laws and successes were modest.[50]

What is often overlooked is that the evacuee property laws and the political consensus that it enjoyed allowed extensive land reforms to be carried out in Punjab. The director of Rehabilitation in the Punjab was a civil servant and London School of Economics educated economist called Tarlok Singh. Singh was close to Nehru and would go on to serve as his private secretary and then as a member of the Planning Commission. Singh had published an influential monograph in the 1945, which had made the case for co-operative farming in the Punjab, and he suddenly found himself catapulted to a position where he could enforce it.[51] In 1945, Singh had cautioned his readers that the reorganization of rural economy had constitutional questions and would require the planning authority to have the authority and the means to carry out its objectives. Singh was aware of the difficulties of persuading peasants to merge their landholdings and had advised against coercive legislation arguing that it would stultify the democratic spirit. What he suggested instead was a series of enabling legislations which villages could decide to opt into over a course of fifteen to twenty years.

However, this process was speeded up when Singh was placed in charge of settling Punjabi refugees on evacuee land. Given the imbalance of evacuee property on both

sides of the Punjab, it was inevitable that the landholdings in East Punjab would be broken up to smaller parcels when being redistributed. Singh devised a standard acre to determine how the evacuee lands would be redistributed, that took into account the various property rights held by the individual, the area held under him in each right, and the quality of soil in that area. This helped quantify and set new values to agrarian land in the Punjab. East Punjab had smaller reduced holdings and poorer lands, fewer agricultural worker, limited irrigation, slender capital, and a large urban migrant population that were being settled as agriculturalists. Using his mandate to "restore the economy dislocated by partition," Singh drew upon state resources to provide capital and tools but in the process advocated certain forms of cooperative farming. The process allowed the state to consolidate land holdings. Whereas previously agricultural holdings were fragmented and scattered across territory due to laws of succession, the new plots were physically connected and allowed for the investment in technology like tube-wells. A vast amount of wasteland was also taken over and redistributed to previously landless labor.[52] Partition and the process of resettlement transformed landholdings and class structures in Punjab and formed the basis for increased agricultural prosperity and the green revolution.

The experiences of other states remain to be studied. Recent scholarship on Uttar Pradesh notes that despite being more anti-Muslim compared to the central government, it maintained a greater deal of flexibility when it came to the question of Muslim evacuee property. The state resisted the expansion of the Custodian's powers as recommended by the Center and permitted evacuees to administer their own property through their agents. Elsewhere in India, evacuee property could not be bought or sold freely except by the Custodian.[53] Aishwarya Pandit argues that this was because questions of evacuee property got inextricably linked to the raging debate over zamindari abolition, where landlords and tenants were put at odds. The state was undergoing a cash shortage, due to attempts by tenants to purchase rights in anticipation of the coming reforms, and there were fears that limiting the sale or confusing the ownership of "evacuee property" would complicate the existing property markets.[54] While the UP laws were eventually homogenized with the rest of the country in the early 1950s, the resistance shows that it was possible for class interests (that of landlords) to overcome the state's desire for control as well as a popular pressure for identity-based expropriation.

The Indian Constitution itself institutionalized emergency under the constitution by incorporating provisions that explicitly authorized the use of extraordinary powers and the suspension of civil liberties during a designated time period.[55] Evacuee property became enshrined as a "permanent" situation, given the uncertainties about refugee resettlement and the failure to receive compensation for property left in Pakistan. This emergency law allowed the creation of a new market order in India and Pakistan.[56]

Three encounters with the Custodian

The Custodian of Evacuee Property was protected and drew his authority to manage property not from the evacuee but from the legislature and the constitution.

He had no obligation toward the owner of the evacuee property, and his orders were final and could not be challenged before the courts of law. The Custodian's responsibility was not just managing evacuee property but also identifying it in the first place. To this end, the Custodian was empowered to call witnesses and to search for evidence. The Custodians attracted a number of informers who would let the custodian know of any newly vacated property or of any families who were planning to move to Pakistan. Many of these informers were refugees who were anxious to secure property for themselves, thus helping the Custodian penetrate the local communities.

The case of the missing partner

Atma Ram was a small businessman who moved from Sindh to Bombay in 1948 to escape the disturbances. Soon after he started a partnership with one Abdul Moonaf Darvesh and carried on his business in a set of three rooms that he rented from a lady. Atma Ram provided the main capital, while Darvesh was his working partner. In March 1949, Darvesh left for Pakistan, ostensibly to attend his niece's wedding, and did not return. The Custodian, upon receiving notice that Darvesh had left and had set up a business in Karachi's Bunder Road, declared him an evacuee. While the firm had no stock in trade, the rental agreement was in Darvesh's name, and the Custodian declared his tenancy rights to the premises as evacuee property.[57] Atma Ram sought to provide evidence that he was carrying out his business from said premises, but the Additional Custodian in Bombay did not pay any heed. The Custodian General dismissing Atma Ram's appeal would hold that the ordinary rules of evidence under the Indian Evidence Act were not applicable to the proceedings before the Custodian, who could determine by themselves how evidence was to be considered.

Given the slow start to their business and the Darvesh's move to Sindh, it's likely that the partnership was a cover for a private exchange of property, which the government was discouraging. The Sindhi Hindu businessman moving to Bombay would form a short-term partnership with the Muslim businessman headed to Karachi and in the process exchange assets. Atma Ram, a refugee and a migrant in whose interests the evacuee property regime was supposed to work, found his interests confounded by the Custodian. By 1950, there was strong discouragement of any private arrangements and a push toward routing all evacuee property questions through the state.

Secondly, the rejection of the legal standards of the Indian Evidence Act was repeated on several occasions. The evidence act and codes of procedure were colonial laws designed with a deep distrust of the largely native lower judiciary; hence, litigants were given several safeguards and opportunities to appeal.[58] By rejecting these requirements, the Custodian was greatly expanding his ability to maneuver and also setting his office apart from other tribunals and lower judiciary. This particular case shows how the Custodian's office was able to disrupt market arrangements, by rejecting "property exchanges" which had arisen organically and by removing existing standards of evidence, etc.[59]

The case of the disinherited minors

Could the decision of a parent to move to another country change the property rights of minor children? In a case involving a family of minors in Bhavnagar, the Custodian spent significant time trying to guess the psychology and the motive of the actors involved. Ismail died in 1948, leaving behind a widow and four sons, the oldest being fourteen. According to the eldest son, Abdul Sattar, his minor brothers went to Pakistan to join their sister who was ill and missing them. They were followed by their mother. The mother later returned to India and acting on behalf of the minor children surrendered the entirety of the property to the eldest son. The two sons, it was claimed, could not come back to India due to the delays of obtaining a permit under the new system. Their lawyer strongly urged the Custodian to accept that as minors they could not really express a preference for Pakistan over India and wanted to return once their sister was better.[60]

The Custodian was openly skeptical of the narrative, doubting that an ailing woman would summon minor children to her bedside for support. The Custodian noted "reading between the lines, the impression I have found is that the minors have gone without any intention of coming back. The mother had only returned to make the eldest son the sole proprietor." He rejected the contentions of the lawyers, stating that even a minor can chose to go to Pakistan and declared their shares evacuee property.

In the latter case, once again we see a family trying to manage its economic resources. Under Islamic law in India, property devolves to all heirs according to the Koranic shares. Thus, with the death of the father in 1948, the property was fragmented. As the Custodian himself admitted, the situation was unsafe and it's entirely plausible that the mother and minor children wanted to move to safety but they had to device a way without losing their economic assets, demonstrating how ordinary people became swiftly aware of the requirements of evacuee law and sought to find loopholes. The Custodian was unrestrained by both law and procedure and could persuade any line of enquiry he found relevant, unlike an ordinary court bound by rules of evidence presented. The Custodian could determine facts outside the elaborate procedures laid down by colonial law. His interpretation of the family's actions is a mere supposition; there is little or no evidence produced beyond probabilities, yet it determines the decision.

The case of the shady soldier

Dafedar Niranjan Singh was a Sikh solider in the Patiala army and was trying to maintain peace during the communal violence of August 1949. He returned home to Patiala to find that the lock on his door was broken and some refugees were residing there. He successfully moved the local Custodian's office to have his house returned to him. He then proceeded to make repairs and sell the house to a major in the Indian army. Six years later, the Custodian's office came across a registered sale deed from the 1930s, which proved that the house in question had belonged to one Abdul

Bari, who had since moved to Pakistan. The deed was brought to the Custodian's notice by Abdul Bari's son, who was visiting from Pakistan. The son claimed that the house was occupied illegally, and he could provide oral and documentary evidence to prove his claims. The Custodian came across a registered sale deed in Abdul Bari's name. The son noted that his father had buried valuables in the house, which by the virtue of being movable property he wanted to claim back. Declaring that the house was evacuee property, the Custodian's office issued notice to evict the current residents and recommend prosecution of those who had fraudulently "converted" the property. Niranjan Singh denied these charges and claimed that this was ancestral property.[61]

Niranjan Singh hired the former Custodian General Achhru Ram as his lawyer who argued that the original order could not be reviewed on technical grounds that a determination of ownership once made was final. The deputy Custodian was not convinced and noted that the original order was neither legal nor proper and, given the allegations, it would be improper to leave the matter undetermined.[62] Niranjan Singh then moved the Supreme Court which after some deliberations categorically held that they were not concerned about whether the Custodian had made the order illegally or without jurisdiction but were only concerned with whether an order once it has been final can be set aside. Relying on s.58 (3) of the Evacuee Property Act, they held that the original finding of the Custodian still remained valid and the later evaluations would not change that.[63]

This case offers several interesting insights into the working of evacuee property. As I mentioned earlier, it is widely acknowledged that refugees and local Hindu groups occupied, squatted, and broke into empty Muslim homes and properties. The key factor being this form of refugee agency is that the actions are illegal and are recognized as such by both refugees and the state. In this case, Dafedar Niranjan Singh was able to displace some refugees as well as the original Muslim owners through his use of legal methods. He didn't need to break the lock but was able to secure the property through the notice provided by the Custodian. We don't know if the then Custodian was a willing accomplice in the act, but it's clear that the Custodian's office could be misused by people with information and resources, which by hiring Achhru Ram, Niranjan Singh demonstrated that he had. What this also underlines is how easy it was to forge documentation amid the chaos of Partition when public records were unavailable or destroyed.

Contrary to the dominant narrative, the Custodian's office in this case emerges as quite sympathetic to the original Muslim owners of the property, even encouraging them to recover their movable properties. This is not surprising, as acknowledging Abdul Bari's title would not return the property to Bari but to the Custodian's office. The Supreme Court's decision to preserve status quo can be seen as an attempt to protect a certain property order. If the Custodian could continue to revise the title depending on new information, it would make an already-precarious property regime shakier and make it difficult to conduct economic transactions. Even in this particular case, the major had bought the property from Niranjan Singh believing it to be completely legal and backed by the authority of the Custodian.

Taming the Custodian: Bringing bureaucrats under control

Who was the Custodian? Both India and Pakistan had a centrally appointed Custodian, who helmed a network of deputy Custodians and assistant Custodians across the country. The primary Custodian was often a retired High Court judge, like Achhru Ram and G.D Khosla in India. These individuals would have been appointed to the judiciary by the colonial government, but they had enough credibility to be entrusted with a discretionary office by the nationalist government. Many were refugees themselves, both Ram and Khosla having been judges on the Lahore High Court. The custodians at lower levels were staffed by members of the bureaucracy, many of whom had been recently recruited.[64] The Custodians themselves emerged as prominent public figures subject to both flattery and criticism. H.L Mittal and Bhawani Lal, who wrote one of the earliest treatises on evacuee property, piously hoped that "under the sedulous care and watchful eye of Shri Achhru Ram, the displaced persons may attain the fruition of their hopes and the alleviation of their suffering."[65] The Indian intelligence services reported with some alarm about a group of beautiful women, described as "Mata Haris," who were "taking a good deal of interest in representing cases of evacuee property to the Custodian." The Custodian apparently trusted these women as a source of information and was covering her petrol rations. Hyderabad was a former princely state which had been reluctantly integrated into Indian Territory. The former bureaucracy had been replaced by people from the outside who did not have social links or deep knowledge of the city. Thus, it was not surprising that these informal channels of information between the Custodian and others developed. The arbitrariness of the Custodian struck fear and encouraged on more than one occasion unscrupulous men to pose as officials from the Custodian's office to exhort money.[66]

In the absence of a formal channel of complaints, informal complaints and bad press attempted to check unpopular custodians. J.N Lobo, the first custodian of Delhi, was asked to resign within months of assuming office for irregularities. His successor, G.D Khosla, argued that this was because as a South Indian Lobo did not understand the Punjabi refugee temperament.[67] Achhru Ram was soon believed to be biased against Muslim evacuees. Achhru Ram was finally relieved of his duties by the central government after he issued a series of orders impounding the Nawab of Chhatari's estates. The nawab was one of India's largest landowners and an influential Muslim politician and had made his objections felt within the Congress party. Ram's dismissal was protested by members of the opposition who saw this as executive interference in judicial functioning.[68]

Was the custodian's function judicial or executive? This of course was the key question, given that the constitution guaranteed the independence and the separation of the executive from the judiciary. While located within the bureaucracy, the Custodian's office was also immunized from the oversight of the courts. The evacuee laws provided that while orders of the local custodian could be appealed to the Custodian at Delhi, his decision would be final and could not be challenged before any court of law.[69]

Much to the dismay of the individual Custodians, this did not deter the high courts and the Supreme Court for interfering with its working. The Supreme Court held

that when a tribunal, like that of the Custodians, has been set up under a special legislation, the higher courts have the duty to see that the tribunal acts within the limits of such legislation.[70] As lawyers argued, the constitution made it clear that the high courts were to be responsible for the administration of justice and were given an unlimited reserve of judicial power that could be drawn upon when required.[71] However, the Custodian's office benefited from India's federal structure. Given that the Custodian General's office is located in Delhi, only the Punjab High Court and the Supreme Court were empowered to issue writs against it.[72] This caused difficulties when the property and the evacuees were located in distant states like Bombay and Madras.[73]

I touch upon these jurisdictional gymnastics to emphasize the importance of situating authorities within the state. Contemporary scholars have argued that the state should be studied not "as an object site or agent but as a set of powerful yet elusive methods for ordering and representing social practice," thus allowing for a state that stands outside of society.[74] However, this narrative treats the two categories of state and society as relatively homogenous. I hope to show that the office of the Custodian occupied a liminal space in the new republics, located between the judiciary and the executive and between central and provincial authorities. This location is significant for the fashioning of bureaucratic practices.

One of the more curious demonstrations of this is found in a speech delivered by Justice Cornelius of the Pakistan Supreme Court to the young bureaucrats in training at the Pakistan Administrative Staff College.[75] Cornelius had been invited to give a lecture on the French system of administrative law, a system where questions about public power don't go to ordinary courts ostensibly to save the citizens the formality and expense of presenting their case. The matter goes to an administrative tribunal where the official acts as both lawyer and judge. Cornelius confessed relative ignorance of the French system and offered instead to speak on administrative law as it developed in Pakistan, by which he referred exclusively to evacuee property law.

Cornelius described the resulting jurisprudence as a law that had sprung organically out of the Partition.

> It was not super imposed by some foreign agency in the manner of the Penal Code or the Evidence Act.… All was founded on the actual experience of men and things derived from direct contact with their problems.… they have reached the degree of development and perfection that has rarely been reached in regard to any similar laws within so short a period.

However, after praising this system of administrative law, Cornelius goes on to describe the authority given by the Constitution to the courts to intervene so that they can properly interpretate legal provisions. He emphasizes that the courts would accept the Custodians right to determine matters of fact, but would aid them in intercepting legal instruments and "preventing arbitrariness and capriciousness in the experience of public power." Cornelius's response is both curious and illuminating; the virtue of administrative law is its freedom from lawyers and judicial oversight, yet Cornelius while praising the Custodian's office takes pains to point out the

supervisory role played by the higher courts, perhaps keeping in mind his audience of future bureaucrats. It is clear that the Custodian's powers cause anxiety both to the people below and the institutions above.

Conclusion

The partition of South Asia was not the only episode in history which witnessed a post-catastrophic expropriation of property. The redistribution of property is often central to a revolutionary order, be it France in 1767, the auctioning of loyalist property after the American Revolution,[76] the appropriation of Arab lands in Israel,[77] or property redistribution after the Communist revolutions. However, both the scale of the expropriation and the fact that it took place in a liberal democratic order make South Asia a productive site to explore.

This chapter is an attempt to think through the archive of evacuee property in India. It argues that "evacuee property" needs to be taken out from discussions of the Partition and integrated into larger histories of emergency powers and economic development in South Asia. It's exceptional power, omnipresence, and curious legal status make it a rich site to understand interactions between citizens and the state as well as various elements of the state in postcolonial India. But perhaps, most significantly, the Custodian of Evacuee Property showed the Indian state how to intervene in the economy, in the decades after independence, the central government would abolish the right to property, nationalize banks and major private corporations, seize privately held gold ornaments, take over princely estates, and legislate a series of crimes that would protect the "national economy."[78] The Custodian's interventions were the earliest steps of establishing economic control with a democratic government.

Notes

1 B. Lal and H.L. Mittal, ed. *Rulings of the Custodian General*, Vol. I (Delhi: Federal Law Depot, 1951).

2 See, for instance, Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

3 Maya Tudor, *The Promise of Power: The Origins of Democracy in India and Autocracy in Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967*, Vol. 15 Cambridge: (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Philip Oldenburg, *India, Pakistan, and Democracy: Solving the Puzzle of Divergent Paths* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

4 For the state of the field, see David Gilmartin. "Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 4 (1998): 1068–95; Joya Chatterji, "Partition Studies: Prospects and Pitfalls." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 73, no. 2 (2014): 309–12.

5 Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Vol. 31 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

6 Faisal Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea* (Hurst Publishers, 2013); Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London: Routledge, 2002).

7 David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Venkat Dhulipala, *Creating a New Medina: State Power, Islam, and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

8 Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*, Vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

9 Joya Chatterji, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946–1970." *Historical Journal* 55, no. 4 (2012): 1049–71; Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

10 Vazira Zamindar's discussion of urban property above is an important exception. Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.

11 C.N. Vakil, *Economic Consequences of Divided India: A Study of the Economy of India and Pakistan* (Bombay: Vora and Company, 1950)

12 Joya Chatterji, "Partition Studies: Prospects and Pitfalls." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 73, no. 02 (2014): 309–12.

13 Ministry of Rehabilitation, Government of India, *Concerning Evacuee Property* (Publications Division, Delhi, 1950); Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, *The Evacuee Property Problem in India and Pakistan: Pakistan's Case* (Karachi, 1950).

14 Alexandre Kedar, "Expanding Legal Geographies: A Call for Critical Comparative Approach," in *The Expanding Spaces of Law: A Timely Legal Geography*, eds. Irus Braverman, Nicholas Bromley and David Delany (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2014), 95–119. The key difference between the evacuee law regime and the absentee law regime was that in South Asia the Partition had been completed and the evacuees had access to the resources of the new state.

15 Zamindar, *The Long* Partition, 120–61.

16 Rotem Geva, "A Scramble for Houses: Violence, a Factionalized State, and Informal Economy in Post-Partition Delhi." *Modern Asian Studies* 51, no. 3 (2017): 1–56.

17 Ilyas Chattha, "Competitions for Resources: Partition's Evacuee Property and the Sustenance of Corruption in Pakistan." *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 05 (2012): 1182–211.

18 Joya Chatterji, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946–1970." *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 4 (2012): 1049–71.

19 This chapter draws on archival material on the custodian primarily from the judicial archives where several actions were contested and from the Ministry of States which was dissolved in the early 1960s and contained records of evacuee property in the former princely states. I have also drawn on a large variety of published material from the 1950s and 1960s to indicate how public knowledge about the working of the Custodian's office was formed.

20 Govt. of India, Ministry of Rehabilitation, *Rehabilitation Prospect* (New Delhi: 1957), 85–86.

21 In order to avoid property taxes, declared values are often well below the market rate. Also, prewar valuation did not take into account increasing urban migration and pressure on property markets after the war.

22 K.C. Neogy, Constituent Assembly of India Debates, March 3, 1948, p. 1509.
23 See Anjali Bhardwaj Datta, "Rebuilding Lives and Redefining Spaces: Women in Post-Colonial Delhi, 1945–1980" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge 2014); Geva, "A Scramble for Houses"; A contemporary account can be found in Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011).
24 Khan, *The Great Partition*; Chatterji, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946–1970."
25 In the British context, the most recent use of evacuee was for townspeople, particularly children who were moved to rural areas during the Blitz.
26 S. 4 (2), West Punjab Ordinance, No. VI of 1947.
27 S. 9, West Punjab Evacuee Property Ordinance VII 1947.
28 Government of West Punjab, Rules under s.21 of the West Punjab Protection of Evacuee Property Act, 1948, March 13, 1948, sec. 8 (f).
29 Mitchell, Timothy. "Rethinking economy." *Geoforum* 39, no. 3 (2008): 1116–21; Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital*: *Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).
30 Srinath Raghavan, *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939–1945* (Penguin, 2016); Indivar Kamtekar, "A Different War Dance: State and Class in India." *Past & Present* 176 (2002): 187–221.
31 East Punjab Evacuee's (Administration of Property) Amendment Act, 1948.
32 Srinath Raghavan, *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939–1945* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2016).
33 Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava, *Constituent Assembly of India*, April 7, 1949, 2474.
34 Recent studies have argued that the fear of the returning Muslim refugee determined policies over defining Indian citizenship in the constitution and state practices of issuing passports and identity documents. Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Jayal, *Citizenship and Its Discontents*; Anupama Roy, *Mapping Citizenship in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010).
35 See, for instance, Pallavi Raghavan, *The Finality of Partition: Bilateral Relations between India and Pakistan* (unpublished dissertation, Cambridge University, 2013).
36 S. 2 (2), Inter-Dominion Agreement, Karachi, 1949.
37 Joseph Schechtman, "Evacuee Property in India and Pakistan." *India Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1953): 406–413.
38 The Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950.
39 Art 19 (3), The Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950.
40 Sec. 21, Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950.
41 M.A. Sreenivasan, *Controls and Freedom* (Forum for Free Enterprise, Bombay). N.G. Barrier Collection of South Asian Political Tracts, Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge University (the citation is to a pamphlet on microfilm).
42 The Evacuee Interest Separation Act, 1951.
43 I am grateful to Nicholas Mulder for sharing his unpublished research on the subject. See, more generally on the First World War, Daniela L. Caglioti, "Property Rights in Time of War: Sequestration and Liquidation of Enemy Aliens' Assets in Western Europe During the First World War." *Journal of Modern History* 12, no. 4 (November 2014): 523–44.
44 Rohit De, "'Commodities Must be Controlled': Economic Crimes and Market Discipline in India (1939–1955)." *International Journal of Law in Context* 10, no. 03 (2014): 277–94.
45 Article 31, cl. 5 (b) (iii), Constitution of India, 1950.

46 S.15 (3) (c), Constitution of Pakistan, 1956.
47 Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1964); H.C.L. Merillat, "The Indian Constitution: Property Rights and Social Reform." *Ohio St. LJ* 21 (1960): 616.
48 Jaspat Roy Kapoor, *Constituent Assembly Debates,* September 10, 1949.
49 Jaspat Roy Kapoor, *Constituent Assembly Debates,* August 11, 1949.
50 Granville Austin, *Working a Democratic Constitution: A History of the Indian Experience* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).
51 Tarlok Singh, *Poverty and Social Change : A Study of the Economic Reorganization of Indian Rural Society* (London: Longman's Green and Co. Ltd., 1945).
52 For early work on the Punjab process, see Gyanesh Kudaisya, "The demographic Upheaval of Partition: Refugees and Agricultural Resettlement in India, 1947–67." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 18, no. s1 (1995): 73–94; Ian Talbot, "Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonances." *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 1 (2011): 109–30.
53 Aishwarya Pandit, "From United Provinces to UP in Heartland Politics, 1947–1960" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2015), 173–322.
54 Ibid., 205.
55 Austin, *Working a Democratic Constitution*; Nasser Hussain, *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Anil Kalhan, *Constitution and "Extraconstitution": Emergency Powers in Postcolonial Pakistan and India, in Emergency Powers in Asia* (Ramraj & Thiruvengadam eds., Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), 89–120.
56 Ritu Birla, "Jurisprudence of Emergence: Neo-Liberalism and the Public as Market in India." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 38, no. 3 (2015): 466–80.
57 Atma Ram Bhoj Raj v. Additional Custodian of Bombay, 6/3/1950, Bhawani Lal and H.L. Mittal, *Rulings of the Custodian General*, Vol. I (Delhi: Federal Law Depot, 1951), 5.
58 Elizabeth Kolsky, "Codification and the Rule of Colonial Difference: Criminal Procedure in British India." *Law and History Review* 23, no. 3 (2005): 631–83.
59 Zamindar, *The Long Partition*, 64–67.
60 *Abulsattar Ismail* v. *Custodian of Evacuee Property*, Sarastro, Case No. 55, Before the Custodian *Rulings of the Custodian General*, Vol. I (1951). 169.
61 *Dafedar Niranjan Singh* v. *Custodian*, Evacuee Property (Pb), AIR 1961 SC 1425.
62 Application of Dafedar Niranajan Singh to the Custodian, ME Property, Patiala, 27/1/49 [Supreme Court of India Record Room (hereinafter SCRR)].
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64 Gould, William, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India: Society and the State, 1930s–1960s* (London: Routledge, 2010).
65 Bhawani Lal and H.L. Mittal, *Rulings of the Custodian General*, Vol. I (Delhi: Federal Law Depot, 1951).
66 City News in Brief, *Times of India*, December 6, 1956. For a detailed study of these back channels, see Taylor C. Sherman, *Muslim Belonging in Secular India: Negotiating Citizenship in Postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).
67 G.D. Khosla, Memory's *Gay Chariot: An Autobiographical Narrative* (Delhi: Allied Publishers Private, 1985).
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69 S. 28, Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950.
70 *Girish Chandra Majhi* v. *Girish Chandra Maity*, AIR 1951 SC 574.

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72 *Shaikh Mahmood* v. *Custodian General*, AIR 1953 SC 210, *Ebrahim Aboobaker* v. *Achhru Ram*, IR 1952 Punj 1.
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6

Struggles for Citizenship around the Bay of Bengal

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In March 1947, Asia's future leaders met at the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi's old fort, the Purana Qila. "We stand at the end of an era and on the threshold of a new period of history," Jawaharlal Nehru announced in his opening address. European domination had led to "the isolation of the countries of Asia from one another," but now "the land routes have revived and air travel suddenly brings us very near to each other." Independence had yet to arrive for any of them, but all of these governments-in-waiting faced the crucial problem of defining citizenship for their peoples.[1]

Because of their mixed populations—created by a history of interregional migration, especially in the period after 1870—the citizenship laws of any Asian state would have implications for its neighbors.[2] The delegates at the Asian Relations Conference recognized this. "The existence of large groups or minorities in many Asian countries racially different from the majority of the people," the conference organizers conceded, "raised racial and migration problems which must be tackled on an all-Asian basis." The conference constituted a committee to consider "Racial Problems and Inter-Asian Migration." Its discussions ranged over two, related, questions: (1) the citizenship rights of past migrants and their descendants; and (2) the control of future migration across Asia's frontiers. On the subject of future migration, there was unanimous agreement that it should be restricted. There would be no return to the free movement of the 1920s. "Any country has the right to determine its future population," a delegate from Ceylon insisted; on the other hand, he noted that "no law can discriminate against groups who had already been resident in the country." On the definition of "resident" hundreds of thousands of people's future would hinge.[3]

This chapter aims to place South Asia's "postcolonial moment" in broader regional perspective. It forms a counterpart to Bhavani Raman's chapter, which uses a rich archive of popular songs, pamphlets, and narratives to trace the intellectual and cultural history of how the Bay of Bengal's circuits of mobility lived on as a source for a utopian imagination of Tamil society in the 1950s and beyond. My argument in what follows is that modern citizenship in South and Southeast Asia was built upon the *disavowal of migration*. This history has enduring consequences in the

region today: witness the protracted and violent conflicts that have consumed Sri Lanka and Burma since the 1980s, to all of which the issue of citizenship has been central, or the enduring marginalization and discrimination faced by minorities in Malaysia.

On another level, this disavowal of migration is a phenomenon that the recent move toward transnational, connected, and circulatory histories finds it difficult to account for. Much recent work has demonstrated how fully Asia's political modernity was the product of the transregional circulation of ideas. We know how central long-distance migration has been to urban life, and to the distinctive forms of colonial capitalism that animated the port cities of the Indian Ocean rim, from Bombay to Singapore. We have seen how diasporas and diasporic cultures crossed imperial frontiers and how inter-Asian encounters created hybrid cultural forms. More ambitiously, the history of inter-Asian migration and cultural circulation has been told as the story of a distinctively Asian cosmopolitanism—built on imperial networks but often anticolonial, or at least ambivalent, in orientation, nourished by the interaction of multiple diasporas in a competitive quest for modernity. In showing how quickly this world fell apart, this chapter questions—implicitly, at least—how deeply rooted that cosmopolitanism really was. At the least, we need to distinguish between the everyday interactions and accommodations—messy, improvised, and often far from self-conscious—that took place across cultural boundaries in Asia's port cities, and a political ethic of cosmopolitanism, which, if it existed at all, was fragile.

This is the central paradox at the heart of this chapter: it was precisely because a world of circulating migrant labor seemed so starkly an illustration of the inequalities and the violence of colonial capitalism that so many postcolonial states stepped in to regulate or even to prevent it; in doing so, new laws had a devastating effect on the lives of millions of people who had built their lives upon mobility.

The rise of mass migration

While the eastern Indian Ocean had been connected for centuries by the constant but small-scale movement of traders, pilgrims, as well as free and slave labor, mobility underwent a transformation in scale after the mid-nineteenth century. The broad contours of this story are familiar.[4] Mass migration met the needs of expanding empires. Capital investment in plantation agriculture created a demand for labor; industrialization spurred demand for natural resources. New technologies of transportation and communication made long-distance migration faster and cheaper. What we have not recognized until relatively recently is the scale of the mobility in Asia as compared with the North Atlantic. Adam McKeown's overview made this point starkly—in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were two other streams of global migration as large or larger than trans-Atlantic movement: the movement of Indians and Chinese to Southeast Asia, and the movement of people from China's interior to the far northwest, in Manchuria.[5]

The opening of new frontiers of cultivation produced an insistent demand for labor. Asia's frontier regions—for the most part, the forest frontiers of mainland and island Southeast Asia—had low population densities. Local peasantries did not find wage labor on plantations attractive, and many fought to preserve the freedom of subsistence production or shifting cultivation. The structures and precedents were in place to draw labor, instead, from the densely populated heartlands of coastal southern China and the eastern seaboard of the Indian subcontinent: revolutions in transportation made this prospect a reality.

There were approximately twenty-eight million passenger journeys in both directions across the Bay of Bengal between 1840 and 1940, the majority of them undertaken after 1880.[6] The vast majority of this movement was back and forth between India and just three destinations: Burma, Ceylon, and Malaya. No other part of the Indian Ocean experienced migration on anything like that scale. A small proportion of those who moved to Malaya moved under contracts of indenture, akin to those that had taken Indian laborers to the sugar-producing colonies of the Indian Ocean and the West Indies after the abolition of slavery. But the vast majority of migration was channeled through labor recruiters, known as *kangani*—usually existing plantation workers who went back to their villages to recruit more men; the whole system was built upon debt.

The distinctive characteristic of this migration was its circularity. Until the 1930s, 70–80 percent of those who traveled out from India returned within three to seven years. At the same time, mortality rates—particularly on the plantations of Malaya—were astonishingly high in the 1870s and 1880s. The numbers who moved to settle in Southeast Asia were limited. The structure of migration also determined its gender dynamics: until the 1920s, circulation between India and Burma and Malaya was overwhelmingly the preserve of young men, though migration between India and Ceylon (a shorter distance, and to tea rather than rubber plantations) involved many women from the nineteenth century. Many of the young men were unmarried; others left their wives in India. The mass migration of women across the Bay in the 1920s and 1930s was both consequence and cause of the greater settledness of Indian population across the sea.

Citizenship

It is in this context of increasing mass migration, coupled with an increasingly permanent settled population overseas, that the problem of citizenship around the Bay of Bengal arose in the 1920s and 1930s. The decade after the First World War witnessed a flurry of claims to protection or redress abroad, on the basis of Indian subjecthood: these claims preceded the expansion of representative democracy, and were initially distinct from (though not unconnected with) the nationalist movement for self-determination in India.[7]

After the First World War—when fears of subversion had led to significant new mobility controls, and the earliest use of passports to regulate the movement of Indian subjects overseas—the British Indian government asserted itself more forcefully in

support of its subjects residing elsewhere in the empire. The Indian Emigration Act of 1922, which formally abolished the migration of indentured workers from India, also created offices of the Government of India in Malaya and Ceylon. These agents acted increasingly as consular officers in foreign lands, even though they remained within the British Asian Empire; the officers were now Indians rather than British officials. Over the next decade, the Indian Agents in Malaya received thousands of letters, petitions, appeals, and visits from Indian laborers seeking their intervention in work and family disputes.[8] But the Indian authorities soon recognized how limited their power really was. Often it was too late to intervene once emigrants had departed, and particularly once they were stranded on plantations. Colonial governments were too close to the planters to be reliable protectors of migrant workers' interests. It would be better to intervene, many felt, by preventing emigration altogether.

From the Indian perspective, there also emerged a new way of thinking about the economic rationale for overseas migration, until then seen as a necessary "safety valve" for India's growing population. The First World War was the moment when an industrial future for India began to be debated, and when the aspiration for "development" within an enclosed national economy took hold of the political imagination.[9] "The gross wealth of India has increased, is increasing, and will continue to increase, and it is the better distribution of this wealth that must be our chief concern," one imperial official wrote; in this context, the "few thousands of rupees which returning emigrants may bring back with them are of no account"; their contribution to India's development was "infinitesimal."[10]

It was also clear by the 1920s that the process of circular migration around the Bay of Bengal far outstripped the capacity or the will of the colonial state to regulate or even to channel it. The state continued to play a role in recruiting labor for the plantations, but by this time this was a region knitted together by all sorts of cultural circulations, reflected in the movement of ideas and print culture, as Bhavani Raman's chapter shows so vividly.[11]

Depression and reversal

The depression made the inequalities of colonial capitalism starkly visible. Economic crisis raised new questions about inequality and redistribution, which made the question of political institutions, their inclusions and exclusions, more important than ever before. Above all, the collapse of global commodity markets led to a reversal of the flows of migration that had become entrenched over sixty years.

Bruno Lasker, a German-born veteran of social reform movements in London and New York, traveled extensively around Asia in the 1930s, working for the Hawaii-based Institute of Pacific Relations. Looking back after the Second World War, he noted that, in the 1930s, "international migration in eastern Asia was to a large extent arrested and even reversed in its course." John Furnivall, the Burma-based British scholar, administrator, and Fabian socialist, was even quicker to judgment. Writing in 1939, Furnivall declared that "we can already see that 1930 marks the … close of a period of sixty years, beginning with the opening of the Suez Canal, and, although less

definitely, the close of a period of four hundred years from the first landing of Vasco da Gama in Calicut."[12]

On the Indian side, the return of hundreds of thousands of Indian migrant workers from Southeast Asia to Madras caused upheaval. One labor official wrote that repatriation to India in times of distress "is proving less and less effective as a remedy against unemployment." Repatriation meant that "no relief is … afforded" to Tamil workers: "their suffering is merely transferred from Malaya to South India."[13] This coincided with a fundamental shift in the nature of colonial administration in South India, which Christopher Baker highlighted so incisively in his epic agrarian history of Tamil Nadu: in the 1930s, "the dominating logic of the administrative apparatus ceased to be the collection of revenue and became the attainment of economic welfare," albeit of a minimal kind—the focus shifted to *rural* welfare in particular. "The advance of state intervention in the economy," Baker argued, "was founded on a fear of public disorder and a despairing realization of the extent of agrarian decline."[14]

From across the water, emergent nationalist groups in Burma, Malaya, and Ceylon pressed for immigration restrictions to protect local labor. British Malaya introduced immigration controls for the first time in 1930—initially directed at the Chinese, but also, by suspending recruitment licenses, sought to control Indian labor. "Through eye and ear," wrote one British observer sympathetic to the rise of Burmese nationalism, "the Burman is continuously and acutely made aware of the alien control of the business activities of the country, of the steady infiltration of immigrant workers."[15] Rising awareness of inequality provoked competing claims of entitlement.

But this also gave rise to new sorts of claims to rights on the part of migrant labor that went far beyond the paternalistic language of "protection" familiar from the 1920s. Narayana Rao was an economist from the Telugu-speaking region of Madras. He arrived in Burma in 1920. Within three years of his arrival, he sat on the Legislative Council as the representative for Rangoon East. Rao edited the *Karmika Patrika*, a weekly journal which exposed the malpractices of labor recruiters and employers. He went on to write a detailed history of Indian labor in Burma, in which he staked a strong claim for Indian workers' rights in the territory on the basis of their labor. "Burma could not have built her splendid Railway systems, cleared her inaccessible, extensive forests and transformed them into smiling fields, operated her factories amidst dust, fumes and high temperatures," he argued, "but for these patient, long suffering, obedient, faithful and grateful but much maligned sons of India."[16]

These two sorts of claims—an anti-immigrant claim to indigineity and a claim on the basis of migrant labor—came into direct contention. The first episode of interethnic violence in colonial Southeast Asia took place on Rangoon's docks in 1930, when a group of striking Indian laborers returned to find that their jobs had been taken by local Burmese workers. The localized conflict spilled over into anti-Indian riots that killed hundreds of people.[17]

Throughout this period, resentment of Indian immigration across the Bay was mirrored by an increasing Indian nationalist hostility to *emigration*. Indian writers and politicians denounced the continued movement of Indian laborers to lands

where they were not wanted and where their humiliation would bring shame upon the nation. The Congress's *Searchlight* newspaper lamented the resumption of emigration to Malaya after the depression. India, they argued, risked becoming "the great suppliers-general of black coolies for European plantations," where they would be treated "as mere beasts" and denied "all rights and privileges—economic as well as political—that belong … to other emigrants or settlers—be their skin black or white." The writer stated categorically that Indian emigrants "do not go of their own accord but are invited, persuaded, coaxed and cajoled." If Indian workers overseas could not live in dignity, journalists suggested, then they should not go at all; if need be, the state should intervene to prevent them from emigrating, for their own protection, and for the protection of India's reputation abroad.[18] At the same time, Indian nationalist commentators took a harsh view of the "colonial-born," discouraging them from returning to India, distancing the citizens of the future nation from the "coolies" overseas.[19]

What is striking is the suddenness with which migration around the Bay came to an abrupt halt in the late 1930s; the Bay of Bengal was "internationalized" even before the collapse of imperial rule. As early as 1930, the Indian economist Lanka Sundaram argued that the Government of India should invoke the legal provisions governing migration within the British Empire, as well as "India's membership of the League of Nations" for the purposes of "retaliation and arbitration respectively in the case of unjust treatment of her nationals overseas."[20] For his part, the Kuala Lumpur-based journalist K. A. Neelakandha Aiyar insisted in 1938 that the Government of India should emulate examples from Europe in the 1920s—in particular the Franco-Polish agreement governing unskilled labor migration—to craft a "bilateral agreement between India and Malaya of a comprehensive nature" which would be "in consonance with the present-day conditions in keeping in the dignity and status of present-day India."

Aiyar's argument was not one in favor of free immigration, nor even, specifically, against discrimination. He conceded that "in the modern States men are neither free to come nor go"; in this context, he argued that India should make full use of international provisions to control migration in the "national interest," and "not subordinated to the labour requirements of an undeveloped Colony" like Malaya.

In a world where self-realization was thought to come from participation in a national political community, Aiyar doubted whether labor migration overseas could be anything other than degrading in the modern world:

> The critic is no doubt told to marvel at the efficient organization which collects, shepherds and transports the motley crowd of Indian labourers and holds them on at the places of employment, but it is forgotten that this mass moves about at the loss of its higher self-respect and without volition which is the very motive power for human activity and for the realization of self-interest.[21]

The key concern, here, is with what Hannah Arendt would later call "the right to have rights … [and] to belong to some kind of organized community."[22] Both emancipation and equality, on this view, were incompatible with freely circulating migrant labor.[23]

Uncertain futures

By the end of the 1930s, the world of mass migration had come to an end: it was squeezed on both sides—from India, preventing people leaving; and in Southeast Asia, legislating to keep out new migrants. The question of Indian immigration was central to the development of Burmese nationalism in the 1930s, and the control of further immigration was a key goal of the demand for "separation"—the constitutional separation of Burma from British India, which occurred in 1937. In 1938, the Government of India quite abruptly banned all further labor migration to Malaya, and to Ceylon the following year.[24] Frustrated in their negotiations with the Malayan and Ceylonese authorities over wages, the Government of India passed an absolute ban on unskilled labor migration. The Indian government believed that Indian migrants could never really be "free" laborers, and now they responded by trying to prevent them from leaving India at all. The Indo-Burmese agreement on Immigration, finally signed in 1941, set strict limits on the further migration of Indians to Burma; for the first time in a century, Indian migrants in Burma were politically and juridically in a "foreign" country.[25] The Second World War disrupted these patterns of mobility once and for all, but they were already being reversed.[26]

When the war ended, the future population of the Bay of Bengal's rim—the balance between old and new migration, between migration and return, between sojourning and settlement—remained in question. The war had unsettled the ways in which sovereignty mapped onto territory, and citizenship onto residence. Gradually, the space for ambiguity narrowed. Already at the Asian Relations conference, the 1930s' conflicts over migration had resurfaced—now in an international rather than an imperial setting. "Burmese national policy of the future must always be shaped by the ever present fear of being swarmed by either Indians or Chinese," their delegate declared. Fears about migration touched a deeper concern about the world after empire: "Burma was naturally frightened," he said, "by the possibility that British imperialism may be substituted either by an Indian or by a Chinese imperialism."[27]

The meaning of Indian citizenship was transformed by the influx of refugees across the borders during Partition of 1947: their assertions and their claims upon the state reflected competing notions of entitlement and belonging. The inherent suspicion of Muslim loyalty that permeated Indian political culture after Partition left India's Muslims in the position of "minority citizens." Laws commandeering "evacuee property" made it difficult for Indian Muslims to return to their homes, as so many tried to do after the carnage subsided—in many cases, the state construed temporary movements in search of safety as declarations of intent to emigrate to Pakistan.[28] The presence of "foreign" Muslims on Indian soil caused further anxiety to Indian administrators. As they incorporated forcibly the princely state of Hyderabad into the Indian Union, in September 1948, military and civil authorities aimed to identify and to repatriate Muslims of Afghan, Pathan, and Arab origin—though in practice, this proved difficult to do.[29] Less well documented are the ways in which reverberations of India's Partition were felt around the eastern Indian Ocean.

The border between East Pakistan and Burma was yet another frontier on which whole communities found themselves trapped on the "wrong" side, in ways that are

all too familiar from accounts of India's Partition. Representatives of the Arakanese Buddhist community of Chittagong—descendants of settlers who moved there when Chittagong was still under the rule of the Kingdom of Arakan, in the seventeenth century[30]—wrote anxiously to the Burmese government in Rangoon, asking to be repatriated. In Burma, as in Bengal or Punjab, minority communities feared reprisals from their neighbors should news filter through of atrocities on the other side of the border. "We are apprehensive that a small spark in the form of a communal riot across the border in Aykyab district would inflame the Mohammedan people and place our life and property in great danger," the Arakanese representative wrote.[31] As if in mirror image, many among the Muslim Rohingya community on the Burmese side of the border chose the relative safety of East Pakistan, while those who remained faced persecution in Burma—they still do today.[32] By early 1948, the Indian state faced the unprecedented and unexpected refugee flow across the borders from Pakistan; Nehru's government feared entanglement in the conflicts of neighboring states; they were as keen as their Burmese counterparts to differentiate between citizens and aliens. The presence of large Indian communities across the Bay of Bengal and elsewhere appeared as more a liability than an asset as India sealed its borders after the massive refugee flows of Partition, and sought to exclude those who did not belong.[33]

Speaking in India's Constituent Assembly in March 1948, Nehru indicated the attitude that his government would take toward the question of Indians overseas:

> But the real difficulty is the question of citizenship. Now, these Indians abroad—what are they? Are they Indian citizens? Are they going to be citizens of India or not? If they are not, then our interest in them becomes cultural and humanitarian, not political … This House wants to treat them as Indians and, in the same breath, wants complete franchise for them in the countries where they are living. Of course, the two things do not go together.[34]

Joya Chatterji has shown that Indian citizenship laws, initially defined liberally along the lines of *jus soli*, narrowed: "connected with the territory of [post-Partition] India by birth, or descent, or domicile."[35] This excluded a great many who had left India as migrants generations earlier.

Struggles for citizenship

The "immigrant minorities" of Southeast Asia faced different choices and compulsions. In Ceylon, preparations for independence failed to address the question of who could become a citizen of the new state. In succession, the Ceylon Citizenship Act (1948), the Indian and Pakistani Residents Act (1948), and the Ceylon Parliamentary Elections Amendment Act (1949) denied citizenship to the estate Tamils—approximately 12 percent of the population. They denied the vote to all noncitizens. The Citizenship Act differentiated between two kinds of citizenship—by descent, and by registration. Implicitly, only citizens by descent were true citizens; a

question mark of suspicion would hang over "registered" citizens. Both categories of citizenship selectively demanded documentary proof. This automatically disqualified Tamil estate workers from consideration: few of them had had their births, marriages, and residence documented. Notwithstanding these formidable obstacles, over 800,000 Indians in Ceylon took their chances and applied for citizenship; though the applicants were more likely to be urbanized and educated, nevertheless only 16 percent of applications received before the 1951 deadline were approved.[36] For decades afterward, there remained a strong collective memory on Ceylon's estates of application forms "lost" in the mail, of intimidation and bureaucratic obstacles placed in the way of those with legitimate claims.[37]

In Burma, too, migrants and their descendants struggled to stake their claims to belonging. The Constitution of 1947 introduced two kinds of citizenship, distinguishing, again, between citizens-by-descent (those who "belonged to any of the indigenous races of Burma") and citizens-by-registration. Those who wished to register as Burmese citizens were given a deadline of April 1950 by which to submit applications for citizenship—in Burma, as in Ceylon, the documentary bar was high; amid the uncertainties of the time, many Indian residents failed to realize the importance that pieces of paper would hold. Walter Desai, a retired history professor at Rangoon University, wrote in tones of regret, after his return to India, of the "elaborate procedure applicable to those who desired to elect the citizenship of Burma. The applicant is required to approach the court, of the district concerned, with an affadavit concerning the particulars of his residence in Burma."[38] Those who lacked documentation of their journeys and their intentions had to create a convincing narrative. But any local resident was free to object to an application within six weeks of its submission, opening the way for personal rivalries and neighborly feuds to block applications for citizenship.

Soon after independence, the Burmese state drew firm lines between citizens and outsiders. The Land Nationalization Act of 1948 removed most property rights from noncitizens, and together with new laws on tenancies and land transfers, marked the start of "sweeping measures to liquidate Indian landed interests" in Burma.[39] Distraught Indian landowners wrote to India's Ministry of External Affairs, detailing their dispossession by Burma's new laws. For all their losses, they appeared to be precisely the "vested interests" that freedom and socialism would sweep away everywhere in the new Asia. Mindful of this, other petitioners took a different approach: they emphasized that "poor and middle class people" of the Chettiar community, too, suffered "as a result of their inability to discharge their debts raised in India for their Burma business during the pre-war days."[40]

The next step in consolidating a territorial nation-state in Burma was to secure the borders—stopping the circular migration that shaped Burma's population from the late nineteenth century. Indians who failed to apply for Burmese citizenship were permitted to remain as temporary residents: they had to register with the police and acquire identity cards. If a temporary resident left the country for more than sixty days, "the identity certificate lapses and with it his privilege of residence in Burma." In an instant, circular migration became impossible. The movement of money was stemmed as decisively as the movement of people. In 1948, remittances from Burma

were limited first to 1500, and then to just 250 rupees. Each exchange transaction required the permission of the Controller of Foreign Exchange, who refused to recognize the obligations of Indians in Burma to support families back in India—in limiting remittances, "the Burmese government struck at the root of the Indian family system."[41]

The outcome in Malaya was, comparatively speaking, the least malign; but there, too, citizenship was built upon a disavowal of migration. The position of Indians in postwar Malaya was tied to British plans for sweeping reforms in citizenship. The quest to create a unified political community under Crown rule—a Malayan Union—proved short-lived. The United Malays National Organization (UMNO), formed in March 1946, rallied to the defense of Malay rights and the sovereignty of the Malay rulers. Confronted with the loss of conservative Malay support, British administrators backtracked. They abandoned the Malayan Union plan and replaced it with a Federation of Malaya that was far less accommodating to the demands of the Indian and Chinese minorities. Singapore—with its large Chinese majority—would remain outside the Federation. In the short-lived period of political opening, which Tim Harper has called the "Malayan Spring," there was a vigorous revival of labor activism by Tamil workers on the rubber plantations. In 1947, there were 280 strikes on rubber estates alone.[42]

In the cycle of repression and reprisal that ensued, the radical wing of the Indian labor movement in Malaya was crushed. The small number of Indian activists who joined the Malayan Communist Party's 1948 revolution were early victims of the British-declared state of emergency. Altogether, by 1949, more than 800 Indians had been arrested under Emergency rules.

From this point, the Malayan Indian Congress focused entirely on Malaya, stripping itself of its last vestiges of Indian nationalism. The final stage in the process began in 1955, when the MIC opted to form part of the conservative Alliance—together with UMNO and the Malayan Chinese Association—in the legislative elections. The Alliance won a sweeping victory and remains in power in Malaysia to this day. This marked the beginning of modern Malaysia's "ethnic bargain." In exchange for acceptance of Malay political and economic primacy, most Indians and Chinese in Malaya gained citizenship rights; but the conservative, communal parties secured a monopoly of representing the views of "their" ethnic minorities within government; political organization along lines other than ethnicity became very difficult.[43]

In Malaysia, the decades since the 1960s and 1970s have seen a deepening marginalization of the Tamil working class. The changes in landholdings and economic structure that have spurred Malaysia's economic growth have mostly been to their detriment. The landscape of rubber plantations that their labor created is now a landscape of the past. It resides in memory. As Andrew Willford has shown, Tamil estate workers, many of them had been born and raised on plantation land, were resettled in peri-urban squatter settlements and tenements. Their education on estate schools has left them ill-equipped to take advantage of opportunities in the urban economy. For many Tamil Malaysian families, the old plantation lands constitute localities invested with layers of memory and meaning: memories of suffering or of

triumph through adversity. From the outset, these were landscapes produced by a transnational history of imperialism, capitalist expansion, and mass migration, but the landscapes themselves were increasingly detached from that grid.[44] Many older Tamils in Malaya tell this story as one of a succession of displacements—from their initial displacement from India to open Malaya's lands, through the displacement of forced labor conscription during the Second World War to their final displacement from the rubber estates they called their homes. It is a narrative of marooning, tied to a localization of longing: it expresses rootedness in the land, rather than an oceanic imagination.[45]

Conclusion

The restriction of migration between South and Southeast Asia after 1945 has its roots in the crises of the 1930s, when the global economic depression put new kinds of pressure on migrant labor, while also making migrant labor itself emblematic of the inequalities of colonial rule—they were both the victims and, in the nationalist imagination, the bearers of that system. The post-1945 moment contained the seeds of many emancipatory projects, and many claims to equality.[46] It was precisely because freely circulating migrant labor was seen as compatible neither with emancipation nor with equality that so many states, including the newly independent governments of both "sending" and "receiving" countries, sought to institute a new regime of border controls and imposed immobility.

By contrast, justice for the millions of people—Indians, Chinese, and many others who had built their families' security upon the assumption that circulatory migration would continue—would have involved a clear recognition in the postwar order that circulatory migration was a fact of life for many people, and a new imagination of citizenship that could accommodate such mobility. But where were such models of citizenship to be found? However much we seek alternative futures in the "multiple universalisms" of intellectuals like Rabindranath Tagore, the archive provides us with little beyond abstractions in terms of viable alternatives to the nation-state.

Many of the architects of the postwar order came around to the view that ethical citizenship was difficult to foster in a "plural society." Reflecting not only on the war, but also on the experience of social breakdown and communal tension in the 1930s, J. S. Furnivall diagnosed the ills of the "plural society," that is to say, the multiethnic societies that had emerged from colonial Asia's age of migration. In contrast with a "homogenous" society, Furnivall saw, the "plural societies" of colonial Asia as being "broken up into groups of isolated individuals, and the disintegration of social will is reflected in a corresponding disorganization of social demand." Just such a "social demand," he argued, had brought about immigration restriction in the United States in the early twentieth century. "Civilization," Furnivall declared, "is the process of learning to live a common social life"; in a plural society, he stated baldly, "men are decivilized."[47] Within this postwar imagination of social citizenship, diasporas and migrant groups were agents of "decivilization," rather than guarantors of cosmopolitanism and openness. As we have seen, this was a view shared—from

diverse perspectives—by Indian and Burmese nationalist commentators, economists, and leaders.

The breaking of connections, the end of migration, can be as traumatic and unsettling as migration itself. The claims of millions of migrant workers, then as still today, were forgotten—sacrificed to the building of a new Asia.

Notes

1 *Asian Relations: Being Report of the Proceedings and Documentation of the First Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March–April 1947* (New Delhi: Asian Relations Organization, 1948), 91–99.
2 I set out the larger historical context for the arguments in this chapter in more detail in my *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
3 *Asian Relations,* 91–99.
4 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*, *1875–1914* (London: Vintage, 1989).
5 Adam McKeown, "Global Migration, 1846–1940." *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 155–89.
6 The following paragraphs are a condensed account drawn from *Crossing the Bay of Bengal*, chapter 4.
7 See also Mrinalini Sinha, "Premonitions of the Past." *Journal of Asian Studies* 74, no. 4 (2015): 821–41.
8 Sunil S. Amrith, "Indians Overseas? Governing Tamil Migration to Malaya, 1870–1941." *Past and Present*, 208 (2010): 231–61.
9 Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
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7

The Postwar "Returnee," Tamil Culture, and the Bay of Bengal

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In 1952, five years after Indian independence, a blockbuster Tamil film called *Parasakthi* (the Goddess) defied the new republic. The film opposed the Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's Indian National Congress; it mocked the religious symbols of Brahman caste domination; and it challenged the Indian constitution by supporting Tamil political sovereignty. Its title song, composed by the poet Bharathidasan, paid homage to a utopian idea, a country for Dravidians (Dravidanadu) for the people of the non-Sanskrit, Dravidian languages. The rapturous reception of the film helped the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), a new political party, to build a mass popular base and an enduring association between cinema and politics in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Parasakthi's plot centers on a middle-class Tamil family of three brothers who undergo many misfortunes before they are reunited with their young widowed sister, Kalyani. Before this happy moment however, Kalyani's trials at the hands of a superstitious and brahmanical social order push one of the brothers, Guna (played by the actor Shivaji Ganesan), to attack its symbols, a tufted priest and idol worship and make a powerful speech defending his actions in a courtroom climax that made cinematic and political history.

A central aspect of the story has received only passing attention. The brothers are migrants who were caught in the Second World War in Burma (now Myanmar). Early scenes in the film reference the historic fall of Rangoon (now Yangon) to the Japanese in 1942, when Indian migrants who had dominated the city fled in their hundreds of thousands. Each brother represents a segment of the refugee population—the eldest is a professional, a judge, the middle brother is an entrepreneur played by Shivaji Ganesan who is robbed upon his return and treated as a pickpocket, and the youngest brother is injured and forced to walk as a pauper all the way back to India.

At one level the film narrates the loss of British Burma to the Japanese Army during the Second World War.[1] But this war story of flight etches an important narrative of reconstruction and homecoming in the postcolonial moment. *Parasakthi*'s story via Dravidianist political themes narrates the survival and re-unification of Tamil refugees with kin and nation. It envisions a postcolonial

Tamil society built through familial relations between the state, entrepreneurs or capitalists and the poor. The film concludes with a song, "everyone should live well" (*ellorum vazha vendum*) with stock footage of Indian Tamil leaders and the promise of the good life to come. Reincarnated as a returnee, the refugee from Southeast Asia is thus at the heart of *Parasakthi*'s effort to etch a transcendent Tamil nation.

The Bay was torn asunder by the Second World War and imperial withdrawal. Many who watched *Parasakthi* knew the plight of refugees first hand, or through family memory and newspaper reports. Over the 1940s, Tamil papers like the *Thanthi* (Telegraph) had made Southeast Asian immigration policies, exodus, violence, and occupation more immediate to Tamil readers than the partition of Punjab and Indian independence. This made *Parasakthi*'s promise of sanctuary, refuge, modernity, and welfare especially potent.[2]

Parasakthi's depiction of Tamil identity in confrontation with India was not unusual. Tamil culture and the idea of India have a historically conflicted relationship. Ambivalence turned to open confrontation from the 1930s with popular mobilization around the Tamil language. The demand for a separate Dravidanadu (Dravidian Country) quickly followed.[3] Indeed *Parasakthi* is often at the center of debates about the lost potential of this Dravidian radicalism, Dravidianist transactions with the postcolonial Indian nation-state and the etatization of Indian Tamil linguistic nationalism. Thus scholars like M. S. S. Pandian have used the film to map the DMK's ideological watering down through cinema and image.[4] Such analyses have also noted that the DMK leadership's mass political ambitions exceeded their commitment to secession, something it called off in 1963.

The Government of India's accommodation of Tamil aspiration as provincial autonomy is usually attributed to Nehru's successful project to territorialize culture. On their part, Tamil Indian leaders regularly draw on the dream of political sovereignty as an unfinished project to oppose "Delhi bullying" and as a discourse of convergence to suture otherwise complex their own ideological differences. This complicated and consciously unfinished relationship between the idea of India and idea of Tamil community was shaped by the postcolonial moment. The two most important Dravidian political leaders of the time, Periyar (E. V. Ramasami) the leader of the Self Respect Movement and key architect of the idea of Dravidanadu, and his protégé C. N. Annadurai disagreed about Indian independence in 1947 (the former termed it a day of mourning) but agreed that their ends, a future Dravidanadu, were the same.

There is another important, if related, aspect of the postcolonial moment pertinent to the "cultural turn" in Dravidian politics in India in the 1950s. Events and imaginaries produced by migration across the Bay of Bengal provided an important context for the recalibration of Tamil culture. In this sense, both postcolonial subnationalist and self-determinist aspects of Tamil political culture are significantly layered by the transregional and transnational exchange facilitated by migration under British rule, a history that is only now attracting significant scholarly interest.[5] As this chapter hopes to show, the unfinished relationship between India and Tamil community in the postcolonial moment is best understood in nonlinear and trans-regional terms. The idea of Tamil belonging was made and remade using and reusing

ideas about civilization and linguistic difference in ways that crossed and uncrossed with migrant history. Furthermore, when looked at through the lens of return and repatriation, the idea of Tamil belonging brings into view some of the issues that we now exclusively associated with the Partition of British India into India, Pakistan, and East Pakistan. At the same time, it unearths how national belonging was recalibrated to offset the demands of the Bay's workers.

Framing Tamil culture in the postcolonial moment

The Second World War created an unprecedented global dislocation of noncombatant populations. The extent of dislocation was such that the "returnee," a term associated with a soldier returning from battle, began to be used to distinguish the welcome civilian from an ocean of refugees and forced repatriates. The returnee became a figure of the nation.

During the tumultuous transition that followed British imperial withdrawal, the nation-states of South and Southeast Asia territorialized cultural belonging by sharply restricting the laws of citizenship. These nationalizing and denationalizing processes were entangled with each other.[6] Wartime necessity braided these laws, but as Sunil Amrith writes, there was a palpable hostility to migrants grounded in a belief that binational or bicultural belonging would obstruct a genuinely redistributive society. Thus, Nehru famously advised overseas Indians not to return but to stay in their countries of residence as good minorities and fight for equal citizenship.[7] The leader of the Dravidian movement, Periyar would do the same when he visited Malaysia in the 1950s.[8]

After the First World War, Hannah Arendt writes, in Europe, the right to the state was restricted in idea and practice to those who enjoyed the right of origin or the fact of birth, creating two permanent subaltern populations: the minorities and the stateless.[9] Under the oversight of the League of Nations, protection treaties were signed to guarantee basic rights to minorities.[10] The growing numbers of the stateless ended this illusion of juridical protection. Rather than minority protection by law, Arendt writes, interwar state-making took up forced repatriation to avoid statelessness. To which we might add "partition thinking" also began to be the preferred means to craft homogenous societies where possible.[11]

The new nation-states around the Bay of Bengal inscribed their laws of citizenship on a shattered landscape made by waves of repatriation in which anticolonial nationalism and imperial governance had implicated each other since the First World War. The British Empire had cultivated migration along an ethnic logic. Prior to the First World War in the British Empire's many mixed societies, "alien talk" had proliferated and rendered the grounds for naturalization precarious. The ethnically organized labor flows grew thick in the 1920s but also thinned during the depression. This volatility served as a site for the nationalization of populations and struggles over population control that would shape postcolonial citizenship. The world order of nation-states and nations-in-the-making arrived braided within imperial frameworks and placed millions outside the protection of future constitutions. The

rise of Pan-Asianism nourished an assertive anti-Western understanding of culture as the basis of political autonomy. But this transcendent culture created its own minorities and served as a vehicle for Japanese imperial aspirations. The violence of Japanese occupation shattered structures of European imperialism. It also washed away any remaining illusions about Pan-Asian culture. When the Allied defeat of Japan in 1945 set in motion a permanent imperial withdrawal, it made explicit the simmering order of nation-thinking brewing since the 1930s.

In these tumultuous times, the centuries-old migration networks across the Bay of Bengal became the fault lines of the new postcolonial nation states of India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Myanmar creating repatriates and minorities as Amrith shows in this volume. Tamil speakers in the hundreds of thousands had dominated these networks creating one of the largest human migrant flows of the modern era. Repatriation in the 1930s, following depression, and ratcheting up of nation-thinking came all too quickly. The numbers are sobering. In 1951, a young anthropologist doing fieldwork in the eastern Kaveri Delta in India observed that many of the precariously employed proletariat, tenant farmers, or agricultural labor had lived and worked elsewhere in India or in the tea and rubber plantations of the Bay. Forbearers of these migrants had worked as indentured labor in the Caribbean plantations till 1918. But people also remained forming significant minorities who faced an uncertain future. In 1951, about 150,000 migrants from Madras State (now Tamil Nadu and Andhra) alone remained in Burma, 582,625 in Malaya, 70,000 in Singapore, 10,000 in Indonesia, and 905,200 in Ceylon. About 200,000 of these were migrants from the Kaveri Delta alone.[12]

Postcolonial texts like *Parasakthi* recalibrated Tamil belonging to these circumstances by presenting Indian Tamil shores and its political class as a symbolic refuge for Tamil speakers made precarious by imperial withdrawal. The returnee became crucial to the reorientation of Tamil belonging to the imaginary of the nation state. But it is a difficult history to recuperate. In the absence of systematic political discourse and the fragmented nature of the Bay's record of mobility and repatriation, symbols and images tell us much about the pathways of return. In what follows, I undertake an archeology of return by examining a range of texts—songs, popular tracts, memoirs, and political essays. The texts analyzed are fragments and their circulation are necessarily nonlinear and, at times, recursive. So while they cannot provide a comprehensive or indeed sociologically representative view of the complex world of mobility, they allow a layered understanding of the territorialization of culture in the postcolonial moment. In fact in these years a series of images from the Bay created a deterritorialized and nonlinear Tamil cultural subjectivity. As we will see, this nonlinear play of image is one with the nonlinear nature of historical experience generated in transit.

Leaving, arriving

Practices of veneration are one important way of marking departures and arrival in many migrant texts. Neither local nor transnational, neither culturally pure nor hybrid

in their connecting the past and present, veneration practices permit a flexibility that is essential for mobile stories. Tamil Muslims, who migrated from the Western shores of the Bay, "inked" their veneration practices with those of other Muslims while maintaining their attachments to particular places in India.[13] Cintu poems, a popular genre for describing travel in Tamil, provide similar connections. Often published in presses on both sides of the Bay, the poems emphasize veneration to mark place and elaborate the ethics of travel. These songbooks first proliferated between the 1900s and 1920s with many subsequent reprints. In the satirical *Burma Tappu Nondicintu* ("A Nondi Poem on Burma") published in Rangoon, Burma (another version was published in Madurai), moneylenders moved seamlessly between India and Burma, land and sea, punctuated only by stops at temples.[14] A song *Kappalerrum Kangani Cintu* (The Kangani Song about Getting on the Ship) too venerates a deity, Selvarthammai, who resides in "nice towns like Singapore, Penang and Segamat" on the eastern shores of the Bay.[15]

Kinship networks secured journeys into unfamiliar. For the traders, Rangoon was a temporary trip where friends and relatives welcomed them.

> After we went on the boat in four days alone
> We saw the Rangoon port
> To see us came our
> Dear friends and relatives.[16]

On the other hand, the hardscrabble young men seeking a better life but who ended up as bonded labor for five-year terms (*ancu varusam adimai velai seyya*) on the eastern shore were described as leaving their *ur*, the world of kinship and caste. But even in this case, leaving did not mean stranger sociality but a boat of discernable others.

> Leaving his wife, children and home
> He climbed on a boat
> And encountered untouchables, sinners, deceivers, and widows
> See their conduct!
> Those who run out of the *ur* and come out
> Their life's breath is torn asunder.[17]

The anxiety about the loss of caste can be usefully contrasted to those who felt the daily violence of untouchability. A. Satyanarayana writes of a colonial report from Nagapattinam in India, that when chided by a Brahman for barging into him, a Dalit worker, responded, "I have taken off my caste and left it with the port officer. I won't put it on again till I come back."[18]

Migration, M. A. Fakhri notes, reveals the mobility of tradition.[19] How could caste be lost when the entire apparatus of imperial circulation turned on the mobilization of kinship? These networks straddled the so-called voluntary and involuntary passage; they determined how to leave and where to go and sustained the racially segmented imperial economy.[20] Muththammal Palanisamy, a daughter of a Coimbatore Gounder

plantation worker and labor overseer (Kangani) in Malaya, described leaving as an escape from lifestyle, famine, boredom, caste troubles, politics, and social problems. But leaving also meant that memories of the landscape, song, and caste subjectivities of her natal family traveled too. From the arid Kongunad in Tamil India, the Gounders carried over a sense of self—austere in speech, frugal in food, and able to turn barren land into plentitude—to cutting rubber and living in the labor lines. Gounder virtue coexisted with an everyday worldliness—an ability to pick up other languages, make friends, and marry outside like some men who took on local wives, usually Chinese or Malay.[21]

In the songbooks of the Bay, ports too are places, rather than gateways to a nation, each distinct in flavor and accent.

> Singapore, Penang, here they are
> In peerless Kuala Lumpur, dwell the Ceylonese
> If you want to stay on and survive, there is Rangoon
> […]
> In the morning coffee (*kappi*) with *appam* (a fermented rice pancake)
> In the evening, coffee (*kopi*)[22]

As the migrant imaginary wandered from shore to shore, sometimes leaving was more important than arrival. Sojourners thought they were leaving for Natal, only to find themselves leaving for the eastern shores of the Bay.

> In Natal country you can accumulate gold and come back
> Climb straight on a train to Madras train at 6
> All the loans taken will fly away like cotton
> You believed the sinner's artful tricks
> Possessions will come to you, hey you young wastrel
> You turned like goats grazing in the wild
> And eagerly ended up in Nagapattinam
> This is our house, come inside, they said
> Everyone was stuffed like beasts,
> In a warehouse for men[23]

In such texts, "India" was a place from where one left or moved back to, rather than having a stable identity.

> What jobs are there in India?
> Hey young man! Why do you carry loads of earth?
> Aiyoyo! Why unnecessarily waste your life?[24]

By the same measure, moving back did not imply a ceremonial reentry. The Malaya-born Muthammal describes moving back to India as a mind-opening experience of travel by car, train, and boat and disembarking in the bustle of Nagapattinam port with its vendors and sea of people. She describes renewing her connections through

the delight of small discoveries: new fruit trees, friends, school, a little-known grandfather, new ways of carrying water, new folk songs. The rhythms of movement rather than continuous residence were layered over by interwar developments.

Tamil imaginaries and interwar repatriation

Migration peaked in the late 1920s and created the conditions for associative life in Tamil to bloom on the eastern shores of the Bay.[25] Print was central to this world, providing a segmented but transnational infrastructure for debates on Tamil belonging and reform. Adi Dravida Sangams for Dalits and the Ahampadiyar Caste Sangam organized against caste discrimination.[26] Tamil Muslims had their own associations in Penang and Rangoon, besides also owning printing presses.[27] Pan-Indianism emerged in these contexts already infused with other meanings, caste or Tamil. When the Periyarite reformist paper *Munnetram* described Burmese nationalist aggressions against migrants, it did so by drawing out the sufferings of the Nattukottai Chettiars as a type of "Indian" at the hands of Burmese nationalists.[28] The leadership of the Congress and Periyarite Dravidianists separated in Malaya and Singapore in the 1930s, but in ordinary homes Periyarite supporters would often also keep printed portraits of Gandhi.[29]

The elaboration of this associative life in Tamil fueled by mercantile patronage also coincided with the sudden and vicious experience of depression and hostility toward migrants. As the depression hit the Bay, the political troubles bore out Arendt's observations about statelessness and minoritization, with one important additional aspect: class. The stewards of Empire offered little by way of protection to labor. In Ceylon, the alliances between Ceylonese and Upcountry Tamil labor leaders broke down.[30] In Burma, the depression arrived in the form of a clash between the Burmese- and Telugu-speaking dockworkers of the 1930s that soon spread into the city of Rangoon. The spectacle of violence of this minor event in Burmese national history made a great impression in Tamil print. A songbook provides a detailed description of the violence, street by street, the choked hospitals, martial law, life coming to a standstill.[31] And yet, in these times too, self-identification was layered. The violence brought out a Pan-Indianism, "The storm brought them together on the ground as India," went one line of the song. But along with it came both self-differentiation and inter-Asian reference to the Chinese.

> Hindi people, Burma-Chinese, Hindustani Gujarati
> Muslim trading establishments were closed down

Or the support extended to the Telugu speakers was described as:

> Indian Gujaratis, Indians and Muslims
> Hid the Telugus in their homes and protected them.
> The Chinese also helped
> They dressed the bruises of the poor[32]

Soon after the Rangoon riots, the growing demands of nationalism in Ceylon, Burma, and Malaya heightened by economic depression called for the repatriation of "outsiders" especially Indian petty capitalists. Chettiar lenders in Burma and Ceylon had foreclosed mortgages, bought up land, and repatriated funds to India, making them objects of public anger that demanded work and the return of Indian labor.[33] The imperial state responded by deporting many thousands of workers from Malaya, Burma, and Ceylon, making it one of the largest total population transfers in the region prior to the Partition of British India.[34]

It is possible to read a somewhat-oblique response to these developments in the articulation of Pan-Indian and Tamil imaginaries across the Bay. Within an overlapping sense of Indian and Tamil, newspapers directly addressed workers and workers made up a growing readership for their news. Coverage of workers' issues was also growing.[35] A worker songbook about tea plantations in Burma and Ceylon offered a synoptic vision of plantation work in the Bay,[36] but for the most part the Tamil press in Singapore and Malaya framed the plight of workers in decidedly reformist language[37] and were quick to incorporate the workers into discussions of Tamil culture that now had begun to center on the promotion and protection of the language.

At one level, the press's support of Tamil language mobilization illustrates how campaigns in Tamil India were simultaneously acted out across the Bay. Volunteers from Malaya went to Madras to participate in language protests in 1930s.[38] In Malaya, moreover, mobilizations around language provided the occasion for reformist Tamils to solidify their alliances with Chettiar and Tamil Muslims traders. It also created Tamil language as a symbolic and cultural resource for working-class and lower-middle-class Tamils to enter the public sphere and demand social mobility within the Indian community in ports like Singapore. So from within the overlapping circuits of Pan-Indian and Tamil, a distinct idea of Tamil belonging began to appear. At the First All-Malaya Adi-Dravidar Conference, formed to oppose caste untouchability and seek education, held on July 31, 1932, in Singapore, speakers discussed the state of the Tamil people and the duties they had to undertake to overcome their present conditions suggesting a political identity distinct from Pan-Indianism.[39]

In the context of repatriation and deportation, however, it is entirely possible to consider a few additional aspects of these Tamil articulations. As the scholarship has noted, worker uplift was absorbed into a broader cultural project to rescue the idea of Tamil civilization from the disparaging term "cooly." In print and in meetings, the good life embodied in ancient Tamil culture was embodied in the trader rather than the worker. The *Murasu* reported that in a speech at Tamil Reform Association, a Periyarite meeting in Penang in 1936, it was said, "Tamils who once made money from trade are now out in the streets helpless for a quarter ounce of gruel. We taught civilization to the world but now we are called uncivilized. We had relations with early civilizations like the Greeks and Romans but today we are called 'Coolies' by westerners."[40]

Prasenjit Duara argues that the discourse about civilization in the era of nation-states is closely tied to a yearning for a transcendent spiritual purpose and bears a complex relationship to nationalism. After the Great War, Pan-Asianism offered a new understanding of civilization, which became a powerful, if changing, spatial

representation in relation to which Japanese cultural and national identity was made and remade.[41] The interwar articulations of Tamil civilization in Singapore and Malaya did not explicitly seek mastery, or demand political sovereignty or territoriality, but it did offer a canvas against which political community anchored in culture would be made and remade. In the search for dignity, these understandings of Tamil civilization offered a transcendent vision of belonging in a context of ongoing repatriation and impeding precariousness even as it extended class hegemony.

An anxiety about the future may be one reason the press covered Burma so closely. The partition of Burma in 1936 decisively yoked repatriations to nation-state-building. Immigration and the rights of migrants became a key issue for colonial policy and nationalist mobilization. In the meantime, Indian nationalists had pushed the Government of Madras to ban emigration in 1939.[42] Further reparation loomed large. Like the Burmese, Sinhalese nationalist discourses now demanded "sovereign" control over the composition of their populations.[43]

Mark Mazower's sketch of interwar Europe suggests that minority treaties did not work. In Europe, the rise of Nazi regime put paid to the minority question.[44] In the Bay, the war blocked the legal discussions around minorities, something already compromised by worker repatriations. The Government of India made an effort to secure some sort of protection for Indian minorities in Burma even as it agreed to tighten emigration in 1941.[45] Here the discussion centered less on the protection of minority culture and more about preventing statelessness by defining the terms of domicility for an Indian to remain in Burma. Talks with Ceylon were less successful as the Indian delegation was unable to reach a mutually acceptable definition of domicility.[46] War suspended these already-fraught discussions. But the war also created a context for a phase of incredible worker militancy. The war economy needed the labor that had been banned by the 1939 restrictions and empowered workers. Now militant action among the Tamil-speaking workers from India drew on the imaginative resources introduced by the earlier Gandhian and Tamil reformist and welfarist campaigns. Workers in Ceylon demanded the right to organize temperance societies and in Malaya to ride bicycles and wear the Gandhian cap. Strike action in one shore inspired the other. Landmark strikes spread in the estates, in 1939 in Ceylon and in 1941 in Klang, Malaysia.[47] The sudden Japanese occupation changed the tenor of this militancy.

Japanese occupation and the worker

Migrant workers experienced Japanese occupation in complex ways. Many estate workers were forced to work on Thai-Burma railroad project, shattering any illusion that Pan Asianism would incorporate other races on an equal footing. But occupation fuelled a resurgence of Pan-Indianism in Malaya, Singapore, and Burma ironically due to the successful mobilization of Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army (INA), which collaborated with the Japanese. Tamil cultural meaning was inflected by this revival.[48]

Support for Bose's INA was a sign of affiliation with Pan-Asianism. It was also a way to seek protection from the worst violence of Japanese occupation. Fiction and life stories converge on this point revealing a layered engagement with the INA. The businessman V. K. Chelliah Nadar crossed the Bay as a labor recruiter and supplier to Burma. During the war, he bought iron scrap from the British and sold it to Japanese buyers, making a fortune dealing with Copper Limited, a Japanese Government Company. Like his other kinsman, he deposited his wealth in the *Azad Hind Bank* begun by Subhas Chandra Bose to raise money for the Indian National Army.[49]

Other stories show that Tamil workers who joined the INA were also attracted to communism. "Malaya" S. A. Ganapathy moved from Tanjavur to Singapore in 1930 and joined the Malayan Communist party in 1938. He served as an instructor in an INA camp from 1943 to 1945, where he recruited for the communists. After the war, as a Malayan Indian Labor organizer, he attended the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi in 1947. He was caught in the 1948 emergency and executed the following year.[50] Ganapathy was also inspired by and connected to Periyarite networks. Certainly his hanging in May 1949 shocked the newspaper public in Tamil India.

The entanglement of Tamil circuits with the INA innovated some important strategies in the estate strikes in the late 1940s. In 1947, 26,000 Rubber workers in Kedah, Malaysia, went on strike led by estate driver A. M. Samy, who had once served the INA. Reports circulated that the success of the strike was due to Samy's *Thondar Padai* (Volunteer Corps) that drilled workers on militaristic lines and taught them to shout Indian political slogans. The movement had an important gender dimension. It sought better wages and especially better support for the many women workers—in terms of housing and crèches.

In Ceylon, immediately after the end of the War, the Indian Congress-linked Ceylon Workers' Union began to build connections to the left parties. A general strike in 1946 and 1947 had been enormously successful, and the government responded by rushing through a Public Security Act derived from wartime laws to repress the strikes.[51]

The strikes did not acquire much traction either in Indian national circuits or in Tamil newspapers in India at the time, suggesting that the uptake of events acquired either Indian and Tamil connotations. Depending on how they addressed or were addressed by these respective publics, they occasionally converged and overlapped but also, as in this case, could become less connected. All the same the overlap in networks of organizers and dissention created innovative practice. But ultimately the border making practices of postcolonial citizenship trumped these demands.[52] After the war, writes Kathleen Gough, Burma restricted immigration under the Burma Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act. Sailing to Malaya and Singapore were resumed in 1947, but Ceylon put in stringent measures curtailing immigration in 1948.[53]

Minority, returnee, repatriate, and the Tamil Rajyam

In the meantime, the idea of the return acquired life in Tamil alongside a further recalibration of Tamil culture in anticipation of the nation-state over the 1940s. These

developed alongside other deterritorial imaginaries in Tamil that opposed the idea of India. But key to the idea of return was the exodus caused by the sudden and rapid occupation of Southeast Asia by Japan in 1942.

Singapore fell in February 1942 and Rangoon a few weeks after. Hundreds of thousands fled. S. P. Adithan, a Tamil lawyer, was one such individual. Adithan was born to a landlord Nadar family in 1905 near the coastal temple town of Tiruchendur on the Palk straits. After a privileged education in England, he began practicing in Singapore in 1933. Along the way he developed a passion for journalism and politics. In Singapore, he associated equally with the Gandhian reformists and Periyarite followers of the Tamil Reform Association. When Singapore fell, he moved to Madurai, India, where he began a weekly magazine *Tamilan*, and a daily, *Tanthi* (Telegraph), which continues to be printed as *Dina Thanthi* and is a major newspaper in Tamil India today.

Adithan began his paper empire just a few years after a popular Tamil agitation opposed the imposition of Hindi by the Congress Government in Madras. A similar anti-Hindi mobilization had been undertaken in Singapore against teaching Hindi in Indian Associations just before the Japanese rolled in. In India, these Tamil mobilizations quickly turned into a demand for Dravidanadu (Dravidian country) for speakers of the non-Aryan languages. From a distance it would be easy to read in this call for self-determination, a sort of yearning for a territorial nation-state. But the meanings of Dravidanadu were complex. Periyar called for a new society based on self-respect and yoked the idea of political sovereignty—liberation from exploitation by non-Dravidians (immediately, North India)—to economic sovereignty over industry and commerce, and social and political equality.[54] As scholars have noted, a deterritorialized vision animated Periyar's Dravidanadu.[55] In its early iterations, Dravidanadu acquired its potency by carving out a symbolically rich imaginaire between subnationalism and self-determination. To a degree then, these formulations avoided the straight up territorial ethnic compact on which decolonizing cultures were increasingly dependent. But the war suspended these articulations. The energies of popular mobilization shifted to the Congress-led Quit India movement.

With Dravidanadu in suspension, a more territorially oriented understanding of Tamil culture forged in the Bay began to gain greater prominence. Adithan made his contribution to this development by establishing a political party, "Tamil Rajyam" (Tamil Reign) in India soon after his return. The immediate reasons for Adithan's move are difficult to discern, but it is entirely possible that witnessing the rapid collapse of European Empire by the Japanese may have played a role.

In a pamphlet authored in the year of his return, Adithan articulated Tamil culture in terms of territorial sovereignty differently from Periyar. In the text, Adithan explicitly contests the idea of India but elaborates the Tamil Reign in terms of a new society in relation to the impoverished Tamil worker and language identity through the figure of the returnee.[56] *Tamil Rajyam* begins with the differences in the patriotism of the Tamilian at home and the Tamil abroad. "I hear that more than the Tamilian who lives in Tamil Nadu all year, it is the Tamilian who lives abroad, whose love for Tamil Nadu as his motherland and desire to be Tamil is greater. But listen to what I saw when I came back to live in the motherland after some years abroad."[57] Adithan described

how when he asked an onlooker why he did not help a poor Tamilian being beaten by a north Indian, the man responded that he was an Indian. Instead of living in his own place, the North Indian had come to "exploit this country."

This talk was about North India but reminiscent of the languages of repatriation forged in the Bay over 1930s. Adithan now drew these to make explicit a call for Tamil territorial sovereignty. In the past, he asked, referencing the Tamil Cholas, did the Tamil flag not fly over the Himalayas? This was a common enough trope in public discussions but coming as it did via the trope of return the argument was unmistakably territorial. He then argued that "Tamilnadu" needed dual independence: from the northern country (*vadanaadu*) and foreign countries (*puranaadu*). These introductory remarks were followed by the cartography of the imagined *Tamil Rajyam*, its fiscal exploitation by North India, its potential political-economic sovereignty through proper economic planning, its viability in terms of its population size and territory, and, finally, its political sovereignty asserted through language. The tone of mastery is hard to miss as is the Bay which itself served as map and theater for the Tamil Rajyam.

Adithan's cartography reimagined the South Indian peninsula and Ceylon. He marked all the areas outside colonial jurisdiction that ought to be included in the Tamil country presenting them as areas of Tamil extraterritoriality: French coastal enclaves of Pondicherry and Karaikal, the southern coastal tip of princely Travancore state (an area that would become the bone of contention during the linguistic reorganization of Madras Presidency in the 1950s), and the northern portion of Ceylon. He wrote, "One part of where we live is in Asia. Another part is in India. Children need to be taught that Tamil Nadu lies in pieces; not to explain the contemporary situation is to forget the truth."[58]

Typical of the Bay's middle-class print conventions, workers were referenced obliquely but Adithan took things up a further notch. He wrote, "The medicine for poverty is not easy; factories, different types of factories; to give all those without jobs, new factories for every Tamilian, man, woman and child [*sic.*]."[59] In this process, the worker was first and foremost a Tamil subject and the provisioning of jobs could be undertaken by the state or outsourced to capitalists. Tamil Rajyam was not a Worker's Raj or casteless or classless society but a realm where the poor and starving could become productive once they were acceptably Tamil.

Aside from reincarnating the poor as future factory workers, Adithan imagined Tamil sovereign territory through infrastructure. The coasts and its hinterlands were to be developed as centers of shipbuilding. The inland areas would produce iron for transport like bicycles and motorcars. The eastern hills near the Madurai would yield hydroelectricity and cement works elsewhere would end famine distress. Adithan concluded this section with another trope from the Bay, associating freedom and power with world trade, "in the past, the ships of the Tamils circled the world doing trade, similarly, if Tamil Rajyam comes they will circle again."[60]

Those familiar with Japanese articulations of modernity, national development, and cultural synthesis would find in Adithan's writing a familiar vision. In the Tamil political context, however, Adithan's vision of employment and infrastructure set the stage for something beyond the federation-inflected understanding of Dravidanadu and the rejection of Hindi. The Tamils need to understand, he wrote, that they didn't

have a place of their own. Tamil had to be thought of as a religion; with or without Brahmans, it was one family. This ethos had to be transmitted to everyone through mass publicity: cinema, print, and the podium.[61]

Adithan's political project failed, and his party did not take, even if his newspaper did. Yet his ideas illustrate the changed canvas of national aspiration to which the postwar Dravidian movement would respond in 1950s. The newspaper brought into being a public that the Dravidianists had to explicitly and increasingly address. His campaign for "Tamilnad" would grow increasingly territorial and popular; he was important to the renaming of Madras state as Tamil Nadu in the late 1950s. These would be key to popular campaigns in the 1950s taken up by the DMK.[62]

The songbooks of the stateless

Universal Adult Franchise was the undisputable normative principle for building a society free from colonial rule, but territory was its main gatekeeper and entry by naturalization all but entirely impossible in the postcolonial moment. To get citizenship papers in Singapore, Malaya and Ceylon, migrants had to establish domicility through particularly harsh paperwork rules. Nehruvian India, where a more expansive notion of domicility or *jus soli* prevailed, was anxious about taking back those who had been formerly in transit or outside Indian territory at the time of independence. The Partition of British India into India, Pakistan, and East Pakistan focused these anxieties on the legal definitions of evacuee, the returnee, the refugee, and the abducted woman.[63] Joya Chatterji has shown how these preoccupations made minorities in India vulnerable to the postcolonial state.[64] While the locus and experience of Partition and the migrant worker's experience of repatriation of the Bay of Bengal proceeded on understandably different terms, the issue of repatriation, the question of who could return and under what terms reveals some of their deep interconnections. Indeed, workers' repatriations between Ceylon and India extend the postcolonial moment till 1970 if not beyond.[65]

Mark Mazower among many others has shown how in Europe the juridical protection of minorities could not work. Recall too that, prior to the war, the 1941 talks between the Imperial Government of India and Burmese and Ceylonese Sinhala nationalists had sought to extend some sort of legal arm to domiciled Indian populations.[66] But the government's consistent repatriation of workers through the depression and support for the Indian nationalist call for the end of migration in 1939 rendered such demands hollow. In the end the logic of repatriation trumped any serious minority agreement. Workers would not enter the nation because unlike the middle class and traders, they were easily deportable. They could make few claims on history; their pasts were too discontinuous, as V. Geetha writes.[67] They would be the first to be placed outside constitutions.

It is significant that, despite the increasingly shrill Sinhalese nationalism and the breakdown of talks between Indian and Ceylon, plantation workers in Ceylon could vote till 1948. What turned the tide for the plantation workers was the Sinhala nationalist fear that workers could build cross-cultural solidarities, and these were

available in practice thanks to the strikes during the war. The end of the war brought general strikes and an election in which workers voted Indian Tamil representatives or overwhelmingly supported the left (the Lanka Sama Samaja Party) and Ceylon Indian Congress. Reacting to the possibility of losing elections, the Sinhalese nationalists under the leadership of D. S. Senanayake, Ceylon's first prime minister, used wartime security laws to crush resistance and tightened the domicility laws using as one of its main legs the Indian-Pakistani Citizenship Act that disfranchised the Indian Tamils along with many persons of Indian and Pakistani ancestry with one stroke of the pen. To gain voting rights involved an arduous process of registration, a burden that was harder on plantation workers who could not read or write and lived in remote areas.

Indian nationalists were aware of problems of establishing domicility faced by "overseas Indians" in Ceylon, and public opinion in Tamil India about the disenfranchisement of plantation workers was vociferous, but they were also marked by that older ambivalence of mobility. Jawaharlal Nehru's opinions on the subject capture this ambivalence and its contingent resolution. Nehru accepted that Ceylon's plantation workers were of Indian ancestry but he argued that they were not "Indian" because they were not present in Indian territory when the country became independent and they were effectively domiciled in the country of their residence.[68] Thus, pressure from India on other postcolonial nations of the Bay continued in the 1950s to grant the "Overseas Indian" (a byword for the estate worker) citizenship in their countries of residence. Repatriation logics focused on bodies and property rather than currency. The financial repatriation of assets of Indians who had fled during the war, in contrast, preoccupied the Nehruvian government and was pursued aggressively and the repatriation of overseas assets was articulated in terms of entitlements of Indian citizenship.[69]

A narrow view of domicility did not contradict Nehru's firm belief in the idea that the "ancient" tradition of composite culture of India was the result of the creative reshaping of Indic traditions by new forces. Nehruvian notions of a composite India split mobility in temporal terms. Thus, Nehruvian policy conceptually included migrants in historical terms in the Indian political community (thus incorporating *jus sanguinis* claims, but from a distance) but excluded them on grounds of domicility (*Jus soli*). This enabled Indian foreign policy to keep a potential door open to return but in effect not open it. This was the obverse to the process Joya Chatterji describes by which minorities were effectively granted a quasi-citizenship and thus bears out Arendt's formulation that the stateless and quasi-citizens existed on a continuum. The ethical position that the nation was the only genuinely redistributive form described by Amrith would destroy any possible alternative that would be developed by organized labor.

It was left to plantation workers to articulate mostly clearly in the 1950s their double exile from India and Ceylon:

> Those who came to Lanka, forgetting Bharat (India)
> The downtrodden who
> After clearing the unlivable Hill-country
> The abode of monkeys and demons

Come comrades to the Lankan's
Domain where in Ravana's times
India's daughter Sita
Had a share
You have a connection to this place
After getting the right to vote to be
Expelled from this country
What justice is this, listen![70]

But it is interesting that these songs that appear as a flood in the 1950s and 1960s give us little insight into whether workers thought of themselves in political terms as Tamil.[71] The relation between Hill Tamils and Tamil culturalism in light of the growing divide between Sinhalese Nationalists and Tamil minorities is an extremely complicated issue and outside the scope of this essay. But suffice it to say that that workers agitated for citizenship by both asserting their distance from India and the betrayal of the Government of Ceylon and making claims on the basis of their productive capacity. An undatable Hill Tamil song (probably from the 1950s or early 1960s) says:

If Kuppamma, Suppamma did not cut the rubber tree
Where will your Tyre and Tube be, Sir.[72]

Public opinion in Madras certainly registered the condition of these workers and advocated their opposition to Sinhalese domination. But these offered little support and were in any case dimmed in relation to the energies being invested in cultivating a mass-popular base for Dravidianist claims through a dedication to language. Workers had little place except as wage earners in the infrastructure of the nation.

Return and a new society

Adithan's Tamil Rajyam expressed an early iteration of the returnee and *Parasakthi*'s rather elaborate response suggests that complicated emotions cohered around return. *Parasakthi* ingeniously portrayed the returnee as both sufferer and modern critic. But the Tamil returnee invited by *Parasakthi* was split. The businessman played by Shivaji Ganesan is misrecognized and mistreated, but he is ultimately the heroic and true modern subject of the film. The youngest brother who was a beggar indigent urged his fellow paupers to form an association and engage in self-reform and become part of a society. Here again, *Parasakthi* opened the doors of Dravidianism to those displaced and who had lost their place in the world because of the war. This would be an enduring way by which the Dravidian movement with its rising sun electoral symbol harkened to a new society yet to come. This new society was a set of codes to live by. In this sense too, *Parasakthi* was of the postcolonial moment. Not unlike the films of Nehruvian India, this was a pedagogic film ultimately teaching people what their place ought to be in this new world.[73]

The reopening of news and migrant travel in the late 1950s consolidated Dravidian networks across the Bay of Bengal among the many thousands of Tamil speakers from India who were seeking to secure their place in the new nation-states. John Solomon notes that demands for a separate Tamil nation from Indian Tamil leaders like Periyar and C. N. Annadurai of the DMK encouraged leaders in Singapore to see themselves as belonging to a transnational Tamil community rather than a wider Indian diaspora. At the same time, constitutional reforms in Singapore made Tamil reformist leaders more politically salient because of their connections to the working class and their close relations cultivated with the ruling party. Here the demand for political sovereignty was received as cultural separatism and enabled Singapore Tamil leaders to affiliate to a deterritorial imaginary.[74] Certainly the discourses of cultural autonomy were variously inflected and absorbed in different contexts around the Bay. But the transnational connections of the Bay compelled Tamil leaders to project a Tamil culture beyond the Indian shores even as this project allowed a symbolic and at times politically pertinent negotiation of postcolonial India.

Conclusion

Nation-state talk even if animated by decolonization is inherently closed to migratory time and self.[75] Like many transcendent visions of belonging, the idea of Tamil political community emerged within an imperial framework after the Great War. Some important threads of Tamil belonging furthermore were shaped and reshaped by migration. Much as Faisal Devji's study of Mohammad Iqbal's political Islam shows, these ideas of belonging were not territorial but taken up by members of the community wherever they lived.[76] Ideas about Tamil culture in the interwar period were expressed in connection with networks of mobility across oceans. While these ideas, mobilizations, and idioms took the tenor of a local context, they also traveled as practice, memory, and solidarity through migrant networks and publicity assuming transcendent forms. After the Second World War, the figure of the returnee selectively carved from the body of Tamil refugees from the inter-Asian societies of the Bay provided the means for imagining a new Tamil society to come. The conditional acceptance of return formulated the Tamil nation against alternative forms of social organization explored by worker militancy. It sought to incorporate the worker as a Tamil political subject, as audience, and ultimately as a base for Tamil cultural nationalism.

Notes

1 Sunil Amrith, "Reconstructing the 'Plural Society': Asian Migration between Empire and Nation, 1940–1948." *Past & Present* 210, no. 6 (2011): 243.

2 On the cinematic imagination of the new nation, see Ravi Vasudevan "Dislocations: The Cinematic Imagining of a New Society in 1950s India." *Oxford Literary Review* 16, no. 1 (1994): 93–124.

3 This vast literature includes K. Nambi Arooran, *Tamil Renaissance and Dravidian Nationalism, 1905–1944* (Madurai: Koodal, 1980); Marguerite Ross Barnett, *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Robert L. Hardgrave, "The DMK and the Politics of Tamil nationalism." *Pacific Affairs* 37, no. 4 (1964): 396–411; K. Sivathamby, *Understanding the Dravidian Movement: Problems and Perspectives* (Madras: New Century Book House, 1995); Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891–1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Eugene Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916–1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); N. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization in Tamil Nadu: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

4 M.S.S. Pandian, "Parasakthi: Life and Times of a DMK Film." *Economic and Political Weekly* 26, 11/12, Annual Number (March 1991): 759–70.

5 S.M. Abdul Khader Fakhri, "Mobility of 'Tradition' and Framework-Building for the Study of Transnational Indian Communities: The Story of Tamil Migration to and the Dravidian Movement in Southeast Asia." *Centre for Advanced Studies, National University of Singapore*, *Research Paper Series,* 35 (Singapore: Centre for Advanced Studies, 2001); Sunil Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Dinesh Sathisan, "Speaking for the Diaspora: Tamil Newspapers in Malaya and Singapore as Instruments of Modernity, Protection, Reform and Change, 1930–40." *The Heritage Journal* 4 (2009): 74–96; Darinee Alagirisamy, "The Self-Respect Movement and Tamil Politics of Belonging in Interwar British Malaya, 1929–1939." *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 5 (2016): 1547–75.

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7 A. Appadorai, "The Asian Relations Conference in Perspective." *International Studies* 18, no. 3 (1979): 275–85. See also Itty Abraham, "From Bandung to NAM: Non-Alignment and Indian Foreign Policy, 1947–65." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 46, no. 2 (2008): 195–219.

8 K. Veeramani, *Maleciya Cinkappuril Periyar* (Chennai: Periyar Self-Respect Propaganda Institute, 2012).

9 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego, New York and London: Harvest, 1979 [1958]): 275; 277–80.

10 Mark Mazower, "Minorities and the League of Nations in Interwar Europe." *Daedalus* 126, no. 2 (1997): 47–63.

11 Arendt, *Origins*, 277–80.

12 Kathleen Gough, *Rural Society in Southeast India, 1850–1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 63–64.

13 Torsten Tschacher, "From Local Practice to Transnational Network—Saints, Shrines and Sufis among Tamil Muslims in Singapore." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 34, no. 2 (2006): 225–42.

14 Ci. Ramasami Aiyangar, *Rangoon Barma Tappu Nondi Cintu* (Rangoon: Minakshiamman Press, 1906).

15 Mu. Narayanacami Kavuntar, *Kappalerrum Kangani Cintu* (Nellikuppan: Varalakshmi Vilas Press, 1913).

16 Ramasami Aiyangar, *Rangoon Barma*, 2.

17 Kavuntar, *Kappalerrum*, 6.

18 A. Satyanarayana, "'Birds of Passage': Migration of South Indian Laborers to Southeast Asia." *Critical Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2002): 89–115.
19 Fakhri, "Mobility of 'Tradition.'"
20 Kavuntar, *Kappalerrum*, 6.
21 M. Palanisami, *Natu vittu Natu* (Chennai: Tamilini, 2007).
22 Kavuntar, *Kappalerrum*, 1913.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 S. Arasaratnam "Social Reform and Reformist Pressure Groups among the Indians of Malaya and Singapore 1930–1955." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 40, no. 2 (1967): 54–67.
26 The Ahampadiyar that would morph into the Tamil Reform Association followed Periyarite visions of anti-Brahmanism and companionate marriage. The Adi-Dravida Sangams were initially affiliated to Gandhianism. Amrith, *Crossing,* 143, 173; Kernial Singh Sandhu and A. Mani, eds. *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia (First Reprint 2006)* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), 207.
27 Tschacher, "From Local Practice."
28 Amrith, *Crossing*, 173.
29 G. Sarangapany, who had invited Periyar to address huge crowds in 1929 and 1931, may have had little to do with the Congress officially, but A.C. Subbiah, a businessman, and S.P. Adithan worked with both R. Nathan, the labor leader, who appears to have moved from self-respect circles to socialist factions of the Congress.
30 S. Nadesan, *A History of Up-Country Tamil People of Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Nandalala, 1993). Also see Patrick Peebles, *The Plantation Tamils of Ceylon* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2001).
31 T. Caminatha Thasar, *Barmiyarkalukkum Telungarkarkalulukkum May 26, 1930 Nikazhinta Barma Nattu Patukolai* (Rangoon: Chulia Press, 1930).
32 Ibid.
33 Nadesan, *Up-Country Tamil People*, 126–27.
34 In two short years, between 1930 and 1932, 190,000 Tamil workers were repatriated from Malaya (Sunil Amrith, *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 91). A total of 73,388 workers were repatriated from Ceylon, 42,343 in 1933 alone (Nadesan, *Up-Country Tamil People*, 123). The remittances sent by these workers were paltry; indeed, it was Chettiar capitalists who sent the lion's share back (Nadesan, *Up-Country Tamil People*, 128), and these were nothing compared to the British.
35 Nadesan, *Up-Country Tamil People*, 91. At this time, the labor organizer Natesa Iyer's paper *Desa Baktan* (Patriot) addressed Plantation Workers as Indian workers
36 Matura Baskar Kirusnar, *Irankun, Barma, Ilankai, Teyilaittottap Pattu* (Madurai: Ramasami Konar, 1928).
37 Dinesh Sathisan, "Speaking for the Diaspora: Tamil Newspapers in Malaya and Singapore as Instruments of Modernity, Protection, Reform and Change, 1930–40." *The Heritage Journal* 4 (2009): 74–96.
38 Alagirisamy, "The Self-Respect Movement and Tamil Politics."
39 Sathisan, "Speaking for the Diaspora," 88.
40 Ibid., 92.
41 Prasenjit Duara, "Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism." *Journal of World History* 12, no. 1 (2012): 109.
42 Amrith, *Crossing*.

43 Public Records Office (Kew, UK), CO/54/982, "Indians in Ceylon."
44 Mazower, "Minorities."
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Nadesan, *Up-Country Tamil People*, 93.
48 John Solomon, "The Decline of Pan-Indian Identity and the Development of Tamil Cultural Separatism in Singapore, 1856–1965." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 35, no. 2 (2012): 257–81.
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50 M. Stenson, *Race, Class and Colonialism in Western Malaysia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia and University of Queensland, 1980), 104, 160.
51 Nadesan, *Up-Country Tamil People*.
52 V. Geetha, "Stateless Tamils: The Many Ironies of Nationhood in India and Ceylon, circa 1948." Unpublished paper.
53 Gough, *Rural Society*, 63.
54 Nambi Arooran, *Tamil Renaissance*.
55 M.S.S. Pandian, "Denationalising" the Past: "Nation," in E.V. Ramasamy's Political Discourse, *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, no. 42 (1993), 2282–87.
56 S.P. Adithan, *Tamil Rajyam* (Madurai: Tamilan Kariyalayam, 1942).
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 In the late 1950s, Adithan elaborated *Tamil Rajyam* in a booklet, *Tamil Perarasu* (Tamil Empire), in which he incorporated the idea mooted by the Sethusamudaram Project Committee 1955 to build a shipping canal in the Palk straits.
61 Adithan, *Tamil Rajyam*.
62 Adithan would be part of many political parties. He fought the 1952 elections as a member of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party. In 1958, he started another party called "Naam Tamilar" (We Tamils). In 1967, this party allied and merged with the DMK. The same year Adithan became the speaker of the Tamilnadu Assembly.
63 Veena Das, *Critical Events*, *An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995); Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders & Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).
64 Chatterji, "South Asian Citizenship,."
65 Ravindran Sriramachandran, "Life Is Where We Are Not: Making and Managing the Plantation Tamils," PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2010.
66 "Indians in Ceylon" (CO/54/982); Colonial Office Records, Public Record Office, London: National Archives of Britain.
67 V. Geetha, "Stateless Tamils."
68 Ibid.
69 Madras (Home) Indexes record a consistent discussion of financial repatriation.
70 "Thoyilarar Thondar Geetham, 1961," in *Malaya Mucanti Ilakkiyam: Paratecam Ponna Tamilarin Paritapa Patalkal*, ed. Pe. Muthulingam (Chennai: Kayalkavin, 2012), 21.
71 On the language of belonging, see Sriramachandran, "Life Is Where We Are Not,."
72 "Thoyilali Muzhakkam," *Malaya Mucandi Ilakkiyam*, 61.

73 Peter Sutoris, *Visions of Development: Films Division of India and the Imagination of Progress, 1948–75* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016).
74 Solomon, "The Decline of Pan-Indian Identity,."
75 V. Geetha, "In a Faraway Sugar Cane Field: Imagining Indentured Labour in Colonial India," in *Contemporary India and South Africa: Legacies, Identities, Dilemmas*, eds. Sujata Patel and Tina Uys (Delhi: Routledge, 2012), 48–64.
76 Faisal Devji, "A Shadow Nation: The Making of Muslim India," in *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism*, eds. Kavin Grant, Phillipa Levine, and Frank Trentmann (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 126–45.

8

Anxious Constitution-Making

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Official memory recalls the moment of Indian independence as the triumphant culmination of the nationalist struggles led by Mahatma Gandhi. The face of the new India was Jawaharlal Nehru. Opening the Asian Relations Conference at the historic Purana Qila (Old Fort) in New Delhi on March 23, 1947, he stood in front of an enormous illuminated map of the continent and declared: "We stand at the end of an era and on the threshold of a new period of history."[1]

Indeed, the end of colonialism and inauguration of a sovereign nation-state was a foundational moment. This foundational act of constituting the new nation took shape against the background of the profoundly unsettled conditions unleashed by the Second World War and the postwar upheavals. As recent accounts have stressed, the war was not a mere interlude before the achievement of independence; it changed the state, society, and politics everywhere, including India.[2] In addition, the subcontinent was convulsed by the postwar popular upsurge for independence followed by the carnage of Partition. Negotiating the transfer of power, forging national unity, and organizing a new political, social, and constitutional order amid this upheaval were not easy tasks. The nationalist rhetoric claimed that it ushered in a "new period of history." But there was no revolutionary overthrow of the old social order, economy, law, police, and bureaucracy. Now the nationalist leadership was called upon to manage state and society. It was an anxious moment. At stake was the reconstitution of the old colonial state into a new nation-state under conditions of turmoil.[3] This anxiety drove the leaders to frame a constitution for a state with extraordinary powers—a state capable of fulfilling the nationalist promise of building a postcolonial nation and society.

The nation in disarray

We are accustomed to seeing Europe as the main theater of conflict. But, as Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper remind us, the "Great Asian War was longer and ultimately bloodier than Europe's civil war."[4] In the crescent extending from Bengal, through Burma, and stretching to the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, the conflict claimed around twenty-four million lives in lands occupied by Japan, as well as those

of 3 million Japanese, and 3.5 million more in India through war-related famines. Japan had crushed European empires in Asia, destroying structures of imperial administration and control, and causing social and political upheavals throughout the region. The Raj was still in command, but strapped. The fall of Singapore in February 1942, followed six weeks later by the disastrous helter-skelter retreat from Rangoon before the advancing Japanese army, joined by INA soldiers, had stripped the British Empire of its prestige. When Field Marshal Archibald Wavell took over as the Governor General and Viceroy in September 1943, the Japanese were knocking on India's door from Burma. As the overall commander of Allied forces in Malaya and the South Pacific, he had witnessed British ignominy before Japanese prowess in Singapore. He had visited Burma on a regular basis "like a Harley Street specialist, complete with black bag, coming to see a very sick patient," the British Governor of Burma remembered.[5] So the threat of a Japanese incursion into Bengal was very real to him. The debacle in Burma also sent 600,000 refugees fleeing into India by land and sea, of which nearly 80,000 had died making the perilous journey over mountains and thick jungles. Tens of thousands were crammed into refugee camps in Assam, Bengal, Madras, and elsewhere. The Raj's resources and reputation were at their nadir. On top of it, the Bengal Famine raged in 1943–44. Years of hunger and deprivation produced by colonial policies and class exploitation were aggravated by Churchill's decision to restrict grain imports into India.[6] Official estimates put deaths at 1.5 million, but closer to 3 million people perished. Despair and discontent stalked Bengal. The government had managed to crush the Congress and its "Quit India" movement by throwing Gandhi, Nehru, and other leaders in prison. But the cost of suppressing a widespread rebellion was high. Military and police forces were pressed into action. The railway and telegraph networks were sabotaged and administrative offices suffered attacks.[7] The Raj was now an occupying and hostile force, besieged by simmering resentment on the ground. A new generation of radical, nationalist leaders emerged to stir the disaffection with alien rule.

Worried that "India is quiet on surface but the political situation is deteriorating rapidly,"[8] Wavell pressed a hostile Churchill to allow him to devise a solution other than repression to the "Indian problem." At long last, when he finally received permission from a reluctant Whitehall, Wavell convened Indian leaders to the Simla conference on June 25, 1945, to discuss reforms in the government. Nehru, released from prison on June 15, was skeptical. He did not hold out much hope that the Viceroy intended the proposed reforms to be anything more than interim arrangements prior to complete freedom. "The spirit of the Indian people has hardened in the last three years," he observed.[9] The war in Europe had ended, but not the turmoil it had engendered. He compared Indian conditions "with the unstable, changing conditions which have arisen in many European countries freed from Nazi rule with the old resistance movements coming to surface."

In his talks with Nehru in Simla, Wavell found him friendly and pleasant, but "he rather ranged at large over economics and history, and it was not easy to get him down to practical politics."[10] This should cause no surprise. Nehru wrote that life in prison, cloistered from the outside world, had been like a dream. Writing a book about India's

past in solitude had reinforced this sense of being elsewhere. "Sometime in the future we shall wake up from this dream and go out into the wider world of life and activity, finding it a changed world."[11]

Soon after the failed Simla conference, he took off for a month to Kashmir, trekking in its mountain passes. Upon returning to "the crowds and excitements and boredom of everyday life," his mind focused once again on the transformations during the war years. "India had changed and under the seeming quiet of the surface there was doubt and questioning, frustration and anger, a suppressed passion." He detected an upsurge of "frenzied excitement" after the suppression of the past three years. "Young men and women, boys and girls, were afire with the urge to do something, though what they should do was not clear to them."[12]

Indeed, mass restlessness was in the air throughout Asia. The war had shattered old patterns of social and political authority. As European powers tried to reestablish the control that the Japanese interregnum had destroyed, they faced implacable opposition. "This was Asia's revolutionary moment when," write Bayly and Harper, "many previously disempowered groups in society—women, the young, workers and peasants—took the political initiative to rebuild their communities, salvage their livelihoods and regain their dignity."[13] A sense of epochal change was in the air as a convulsive mix of nationalism, communism, and ideals of social and religious freedom tugged at the populace. The world appeared on the brink of being turned upside down.

British India was no different. The war mobilization changed the relationship between state and society. The state expanded massively. Its various offices employed more people, and it reached deeper than ever before into society. Police forces expanded to conduct wartime surveillance and suppress nationalist agitation. In Madras Presidency, for example, the police force jumped from under 30,000 in 1939 to over 42,000 in 1945.[14] The Indian Army grew from 194,373 troops in 1939 to 2,065,554 in 1945. Amassing such a large number of soldiers to fight the Empire's wars in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe required recruiters to look beyond the "martial races" in Punjab. Southern India's share grew. Bengal opened its account. The number of lower castes, Dalits, and tribes rose sharply. Military recruiters and personnel became ubiquitous, particularly in Eastern India. Foreign soldiers from Europe and the United States became common sights in towns and cities. Random violence on civilians, including assaults on women, by sober and drunken soldiers soured the popular mood against the military. So did the use of troops to quell the nationalist rebellion of 1942.[15]

The changing state-society relations extended into the economy as the government requisitioned supplies ranging from steel to textiles for the war effort. The colonial state acted to spur industrial production as various government departments coordinated their activities to streamline the requisition and supplies of materials. Import substitution, which was to become official economic policy after independence, became a necessity under war conditions. The government ordnance factories upped their production, manufacturing capacity registered impressive gains, and factory employment rose by 59 percent during the war.[16] To

finance the war, the government raised direct and indirect taxes and borrowed by floating bonds.

These economic changes had social consequences. The urban population grew, as did the membership of trade unions that organized the rising number of factory workers. Requisitions for the war created shortages of common commodities for ordinary people. Spiraling prices, hoarding, black marketing of scarce goods, and wartime profiteering enriched businessmen and industrialists, but depressed the standard of life of the salaried classes and the poor.[17] The war touched the poor in other ways. Besides being recruited as soldiers, they also supplied the massive labor needed for road construction.

With these war efforts, the expanded and militarized state moved deeply into Indian society, permitting it to exercise greater control over the governed population. This happened globally during the Second World War. Everywhere, the mobilization for war and militarization brought the state directly into the lives of the people. A witness to this process was Phillips Talbot, an American journalist who reported from India between 1938 and 1950. In early 1946, he wrote: "The war has introduced new and strange elements, excited political loyalties and enmities and intensified struggles for power … The stage setting of the Indian drama has changed almost out of recognition since 1939."[18] The British interwar plans of an orderly and restricted devolution of power stood upended. The old pattern of institutional politics was not dead but mass politics had sharply risen to surface; even an old-style constitutionalist like Mohammed Ali Jinnah was compelled to take to the streets.[19]

The British got a taste of the changed environment when they put Subhas Chandra Bose's INA soldiers on trial for treason and sentenced them to death in November 1945. India rose in widespread protests. Radicalized by the suppression of the 1942 Quit India movement, the nationalist opposition now included younger, socialist activists. The communists had discredited themselves in nationalist eyes because of their sudden pro-war stance in 1942 following the entry of the Soviet Union in the war. But the communists used the breathing space they won from the colonial government to burrow deep among workers, peasants, and artists and intellectuals. When the war ended in 1945, they used their newly gained strength to lead popular rebellions. Their peasant organization led the sharecropping tenants in the 1946–47 Tebhaga uprising in Bengal and peasant insurrection in Telangana.[20] They were also active in support of the Royal Indian Navy ratings when they mutinied in Bombay in February 1946. What began as a revolt against service conditions escalated into a political rebellion, and spread from Bombay to Karachi and Calcutta. The communists took to the streets in support of the mutineers, but the Congress and the Muslim League worked to get the strike called off. For the two political parties scenting power in their negotiations with the British to take over the state, the naval mutiny was inconvenient and even dangerous. Viceroy Wavell was also unnerved. Referring to the naval mutiny, unrest in the Indian Army, and a strike threat by railway workers, he reported a "general sense of insecurity and lawlessness." But somehow maintaining optimism under these trying conditions, he saw in them the "birth pangs of a new order."[21]

From federation to nation-state

The tortured negotiations for the transfer of power under the Cabinet Mission Plan occurred against this background. The deck was stacked against the Plan from the very beginning. Its proposal of creating a three-tiered federation consisting of groups of provinces was meant to address Jinnah's demand for the political rights of Muslims. Underlying Jinnah's insistence was his rejection that political minority flowed from demographic minority. He had won widespread support for his position in the 1946 elections to elect members of the provincial legislative councils. This was not just due to his astute politics but also because the idea of Pakistan as a symbol of a Muslim homeland held popular appeal among Muslims. The Cabinet Mission sought to avert the transformation of the symbolic ideal into a demand for a separate, territorial nation-state. It momentarily succeeded when both the Congress and the Muslim League accepted the idea of a federation of multiple religious groups. But it came apart when, as is well known, Nehru declared in July 1946 that the Congress had agreed only to participate in the Constituent Assembly, which would be free to revise the Cabinet Mission Plan of organizing Muslim and Hindu majority provinces into groups. The Congress Working Committee tried to rescue the situation by reiterating its acceptance, but the damage was done. Jinnah, who had given up his Pakistan demand and had accepted the Plan, revoked the Muslim League's acceptance.[22] He called for Direct Action, and the rest is bloody history.

Maulana Azad, among others, was shocked by Nehru's "astonishing statement" and blamed it for upsetting the delicately balanced apple cart of the three-tiered federation.[23] S. Gopal, Nehru's biographer, believes it is unfair to blame Nehru. He approvingly cites Nehru's reaction in 1959 to Azad's book that it placed too much importance on individuals rather than historical forces.[24] Besides, even if Nehru's public utterance of his reservations gave Jinnah an out, it was in line with Nehru's belief that India needed a strong state to achieve full nationhood. Nor was he alone in this belief. Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel had already stated in early 1946 that the time had come to cut off the "diseased limb" in responding to the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan.[25] This did not mean the exclusion of Muslims. Neither Nehru nor Patel envisioned India as a Hindu state. But they regarded the category *Indian* as indivisible; Muslims were first and foremost Indians, and only then a religious community. Such a unitary and assimilative concept of nationality demanded a centralized nation-state; it had little use for a decentralized federation devised to accommodate the minority's claim for political equality with the dominant nationality.

Globally, the tide had turned against the kind of approach to secure minority rights that the Cabinet Mission represented. Its plan of a federation with a weak center echoed the logic of institutional and legal protections that the League of Nations had pursued during the interwar years. In this sense, the Cabinet Mission was the last gasp of the League's method, which by this time, according to Mark Mazower, had run its course.[26] The war, particularly Hitler's brutal treatment of the Jews, and the postwar plight of refugees and stateless persons had destroyed the League's strategy of international law-driven protection of minorities. As Hannah Arendt pointed out,

the emergence of stateless people proved that the "transformation of the state from an instrument of law into an instrument of nation had been completed; the nation had conquered the state."[27] Political leaders increasingly converged on the idea of states representing ethnically homogenous territories. Accordingly, more than a million ethnic Germans were deported to West Germany from Czechoslovakia after the war. The partition of Palestine and the establishment of Israel as a state for the Jews also followed the same logic, namely that Jews could enjoy full political rights only in a state of their own.

Bloodcurdling Hindu–Muslim violence and the displacement of millions by Partition advanced the remorseless logic of a homogenously defined Indian nation-state. Bengal, which had already witnessed slaughter in August 1946 following Jinnah's call for "Direct Action," experienced a fresh bout of killings in rural Noakhali and Tippera in November 1946. While Gandhi camped in Noakhali to staunch the violence, the killings spread westward to neighboring Bihar and then to the United Provinces. Punjab, of course, was the eye of the storm. By early 1947, cities like Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur, Rawalpindi, Multan, and Sialkot experienced scalding attacks and counterattacks.[28] It was amid this horror that the two parties readied up to divide the assets. The Radcliffe Commission set about hastily demarcating boundaries on the basis of the religious composition of territories. The politics of a homogenously populated state was fully in the saddle. The Bengal Congress pursued a strategy that privileged securing compact districts of Hindu populations over grabbing a greater share of the territory; if this meant ceding areas with economic resources, then so be it.[29] As Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan swarmed east into Punjab and Delhi, the newly established Indian state was quick to endow them with citizenship; the displaced Muslims were tagged as potential migrants to Pakistan.[30] With communal fires burning in Delhi, the authorities treated Muslims and their property with a sectarian logic that even opened a breach between Nehru and Patel. The two differed greatly and often on their readings of the situation in Delhi—the plight of Muslims and their property, the occupation of Muslim mosques, shrines, and graveyards by Hindu and Sikh refugees, the conduct of the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the attitude of the administration—and what to do about them.[31] In spite of these differences, however, both leaders shared the goal of building a powerful nation-state.

Framing the constitution and crafting a state

The Constituent Assembly, comprising more than 300 members, met between December 9, 1946, and November 26, 1949, against this background of postwar turmoil accompanying the imperial retreat to decide on the contours of the Indian state. Over these three years, the Assembly met in eleven sessions, lasting 165 days. Various committees and subcommittees, formed to deal with different subjects, prepared drafts for discussion. Members discussed these clause by clause, offering numerous amendments. Ultimately, the Assembly produced the world's longest constitution, laying out the law and structure of government, and the rights and

duties of citizens. Granville Austin's classic account presents the framing of the Indian constitution as the stirring drama of a nation coming into its own as a constitutional republic. He writes of the guiding hand of an "Oligarchy"—Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, and Maulana Azad (though curiously, not B.R. Ambedkar)—steering the discussions and debates in Delhi. There were differences and misgivings, but in the end the adopted constitution could be "presented to the nation as the realization of Nehru's aim: it had been drafted with the welfare of four hundred million Indians in mind."[32]

Austin's interpretation is now part of the Indian nationalist lore of constitution-making as a moment of soaring achievement.[33] But the Congress went into the Constituent Assembly deeply aware of the need to craft a state to manage the population. At the center of its effort was the project to establish a strong, centralized state. This agenda was already implicit in Nehru's anxiety about the state of Indian nationhood during and following his wartime imprisonment. It was also behind his public utterance of reservations in July 1946 about the Cabinet Mission Plan. Patel, who had reluctantly gone along with the Cabinet Mission's proposal for a federation, concurred with Nehru's view. In May 1947, Patel declared that the "Congress would like a strong centre … it was absolutely essential that there should be a strong army, and for defence a strong central govt."[34] Ambedkar had expressed a similar sentiment some months earlier in the Constituent Assembly. Supporting M.R. Jayakar's plea to postpone the Assembly's passing of the resolution on the proposed constitution's aims and objectives until the Muslim League decided on its participation in the proceedings, Ambedkar said:

> So far as I am concerned, I do not like the idea of grouping (*hear*, *hear*). I like a strong united Centre (*hear*, *hear*) much stronger than the Centre we had created under the Government of India Act of 1935. The Congress Party, for reasons best known to itself consented, if I may use that expression, to the dismantling of a strong Centre which had been created in this country as a result of 150 years of administration and which, I must say, was to me a matter of great admiration and respect and refuge.[35]

Viewed not in a vacuum but against its historical context, the framing of the constitution emerges as an instrument for fulfilling this desire for a strong, centralized state. This is often forgotten in interpretations that mine the Constituent Assembly debates to unearth the liberal values of the founding lawmakers. The Constituent Assembly debates were not just expressions of the leaders' political and legal philosophies but also, as Aditya Nigam suggests, an event that brought together a plurality of actors, voices, and forces into a unity to inaugurate a new state.[36] Behind the practices to install a powerful state was the leadership's concern about India's restless postwar mood. Nehru expressed this concern in February 1947: "We have to deal with a situation in which, if I may say so, if we do not try our utmost the whole of India will be a cauldron within six months."[37]

Mayhem reigned in Bengal with well over a million Hindu refugees fleeing from East Pakistan by early 1948—the figure reaching four million by 1950—desperately

seeking food and shelter.[38] The serene Constitution Hall could not remain insulated from the horror of spilled blood and displaced lives. The newspapers were filled with stories of communal slaughter in Punjab, Bengal, Bihar, and elsewhere, and the harrowing accounts of millions forced to move from their homes. Delhi itself was caught in the turmoil of riots and refugees. V.P. Menon writes that, amid Hindu–Muslim violence and retaliatory violence made worse by teeming Hindu and Sikh refugees, the city was abuzz with "rumours of a deep-laid, long-prepared Muslim conspiracy to overthrow the new Government of Free India and to seize the Capital."[39] As the Constituent Assembly met, Nehru, Patel, and the fledgling administration struggled to contain the chaos. The members had to obtain special curfew passes just to attend the Assembly.[40]

This was not all. Crisis erupted in Kashmir in October 1947. The previous months had witnessed Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistani Punjab fleeing to Jammu, carrying tales of atrocities. Retaliatory violence against Jammu Muslims followed. Matters came to a head in October, when Pakistan-assisted tribal militias crossed the border in their march toward Srinagar. On October 26, the Hindu Maharaja signed the instrument of accession to India. The next day, Indian troops flew to Srinagar, leading to the first India-Pakistan war.

Besides Kashmir, there was also the issue of integrating over 500 large and small princely states.[41] Particularly thorny was the case of Hyderabad. In addition to the convulsion created by the communist-led peasant rebellion in Telangana was the determined desire of the Nizam to hold on to power. While the local Congress Party agitated for representative government, the Razakars, a Muslim militia force, let loose waves of violence on the Hindu population.[42] Tensions mounted through early 1948. Finally, Indian troops landed in Hyderabad on September 13, 1948. Four days later, the Indian "police action" secured its surrender.

The Constituent Assembly soldiered on and deliberated even as these crises erupted and were managed. If the slaughter and the swarming refugees on the streets outside did not receive extended attention while members discussed constitutional principles inside, this does not mean that the two were detached. Violence and upheaval were on the minds of lawmakers. Constitution-making inside was to sublimate the upheaval outside; the clean language of law was to wash off the blood and carnage on the streets. What we witness during these years is state making both within and beyond Constitution Hall. Nehru, Patel, and others deployed state power on the streets to control the population and bring recalcitrant elements to heel, while also steering the Assembly into forging a strong state. Gandhi's assassination on January 30, 1948, too, worked to consolidate the Congress Party's state building.[43] Resistance, riots, and violence only strengthened the resolve to build a strong centralized state. The invocation of a Hobbesian state of nature, Uday Mehta reminds us, has typically served to justify the founding of a state as an inaugural act in extracting unity out of chaos.[44] This happened with Indian constitution-making as well. A cocktail of Nehru's nightmare in 1947 that India "will be a cauldron within six months" and Patel's experience of managing the real mayhem of violence and unrest powered an intense will to institute a robust state.

The Assembly had swiftly moved in this direction as soon as Mountbatten announced Partition on June 3, 1947. Within days, the Union and Provincial Constitution Committees declared that the loose federation proposed by the Cabinet Mission was history. India was to be a federation with a strong center.[45] Unlike the United States, where states had come together to form a federation, India was to be a union of states. Therefore, no state would have a right to secede. B.R. Ambedkar declared: "The Federation is a Union because it is indestructible. Though the country and the people may be divided into different States for convenience of administration the country is one integral whole, its people a single people living under a single i*mperium* derived from a single source."[46] It was to be different from classic federalism, which offered "a weak if not effete form of Government." Unlike the federal system's dual polity and divided authority, Ambedkar proposed a form of government based on a single judiciary, a uniform set of laws across the country, and an all-India administrative service. A strong centralized state with centralized authority was to manage the population and forge a homogenous national body.

Underlying this commitment to craft a powerful state was the condition under which the modernizing elite had come to power. It had mobilized the populace in the name of the nation, but had not broken from entrenched landed and upper-caste interests. Its assumption of power in 1947 was a "passive revolution," accomplished without an accompanying radical social revolution.[47] In Ranajit Guha's felicitous phrase, the nationalist elite's power was "dominance without hegemony." The elite, structurally unable to make its specific interests into general interests, was compelled to rule with a heavy dose of coercion over persuasion.[48]

Fortunately for the nationalist elite, colonialism had already prepared the ground for a strong, centralized state with exceptional powers that could be used, if needed, to curtail fundamental rights. In part, this was accomplished by importing, unchanged, large parts of the 1935 Government of India Act, incorporating its arsenal of executive powers. Ambedkar was unapologetic about it. "As to the accusation that the Draft Constitution has produced a good part of the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, I make no apologies. There is nothing to be ashamed of in borrowing."[49] Institutional continuity with colonial rule was not limited to the 1935 Act.[50] The basic structure of the judiciary and the civil administration remained the same. The colonial-era Indian Penal Code was retained, including the now-infamous Section 124A under which the nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak had been tried for sedition in 1897. The retention of this law, which treats words and signs that excite hatred and disaffection toward the government as sedition, equipped the state with an exceptional legal weapon.

State versus fundamental rights

While outfitting the state with the formidable powers contained in the 1935 Act, the lawmakers did introduce a feature that was absent in colonial law—Fundamental Rights. The Congress mobilized Indians to demand rights denied them by colonialism. These included the right to free expression and assembly, equality before the law,

and the freedom to decide political representation. The Nehru Report of 1928, for example, had mentioned the goal of securing Fundamental Rights denied them by the British. Subsequent Congress resolutions and reports had affirmed this commitment.[51] The adoption of parliamentary democracy based on adult suffrage as a form of government, therefore, was rooted in the mobilization for independence. Indians won citizenship "when they won independence: to be free from colonial rule was also to have exchanged the oppressive status of an imperial subject for the liberating one of citizen of a sovereign state."[52]Accordingly, the Constitution includes Fundamental Rights that guarantees a comprehensive set of justiciable rights to equality, property, freedom of speech, movement, and association, and protection of life and personal liberty.

However, there was a strong sentiment for circumscribing these rights. Thus, when Patel introduced the Advisory Committee's report before the Assembly in April 1947, he proposed that rights of freedom be "subject to public order and morality or to the existence of grave emergency declared by the Government of the Union or the Unit concerned whereby the security of the Union or the unit, as the case may be, is threatened."[53] In such an event, the citizen's right of speech and expression could be circumscribed by laws making "the publication or utterance of seditious, obscene, blasphemous, slanderous, libelous or defamatory matter actionable or punishable." According to Austin, this was mainly the handiwork of Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar and K. M. Munshi. Perturbed by communal riots and unrest in different parts of the country, Ayyar had written, "all Fundamental Rights guaranteed under the Constitution must be subject to public order, security, and safety." Elaborating on this idea, he suggested that the "security and defence of the state or national security" be added to the existing proviso to cover the emergency conditions not addressed by the reference to public order and morality.[54] The Advisory Committee agreed and included the suggestion in the final draft.

This was not all. The Advisory Committee also omitted from the interim report protections on the secrecy of correspondence and the security of persons and dwellings from unreasonable searches without warrant.[55] Clauses on these protections were included in the earlier iteration of the subcommittee on fundamental rights, but Munshi strongly argued against it. He contended that there was no right to the secrecy of correspondence in the American Constitution. The inclusion of such a right, he argued, would prevent the state from discovering conspiracies and constrain its actions under the clause "public order and morality."[56] While acknowledging that the American Constitution provided protection against unreasonable searches, he argued that Indian conditions were different. The police in India had long enjoyed powers to search premises without warrants. Patel and others supported the deletion of both provisions in the Advisory committee proceedings on the grounds that they would aid criminals and spies.[57]

When Patel presented the proposals on Fundamental rights with these restrictions in April 1947, the criticism was sharp. Somnath Lahiri, the lone communist member of the Assembly, acidly noted that "many of these fundamental rights have been framed from the point of view of a police constable."[58] He pointed out that while Patel proposed to make seditious speech a punishable crime, such speech was

not a crime in England unless it was accompanied by an overt act. Lahiri was the most contentious, but he was not alone in opposing restrictions on freedom. Hari Nath Kunzru also objected, arguing that the restrictions rendered these rights nonjusticiable.[59]

In spite of the opposition, restrictions remained in the draft presented to the Assembly in February 1948. Article 13 (Article 19 of the Constitution) guaranteed freedom of speech and expression, but it was qualified by a clause that allowed the state to make "any law relating to libel, slander, defamation, sedition or any other matter which offends against decency or morality or undermines the authority or foundation of the state."[60] This also did not go unchallenged. "It is therefore clear, Sir, that the rights guaranteed in Article 13 are cancelled by that very section and placed at the mercy or the high-handedness of the legislature," Damodar Swarup Seth noted.[61] Consequently, there would be no greater freedom of the press than "what we enjoyed under the cursed foreign regime." The criticism stung. K. M. Munshi intervened to suggest the deletion of the term "sedition," which he regarded as too broad a category. He acknowledged the colonial heritage of the term, and the use of Section 124-A of the Penal Code to silence any criticism of the government. Under democracy, however, a line had to be drawn between the legitimate criticism of the government and speech calculated to overthrow the state.

Faced with opposition, the revised Draft Constitution dispensed with the word "sedition." But the critics were not done yet. Thakur Dass Bhargava pressed for an amendment proposing the insertion of the word "reasonable" to precede "any law" in Article 13, as also various restrictions on speech and expression by different clauses.[62] His point was direct:

> Sir, one speaker was asking where the soul in the lifeless article 13 was? I am putting the soul there. If you put the word 'reasonable' there, the court will have to see whether a particular Act is in the interests of the public and secondly whether the restrictions imposed by the legislatures are reasonable, proper and necessary in the circumstances of the case. The courts shall have to go into the question and it will not be the legislature and the executive who could play with the fundamental rights of the people.

Ambedkar accepted the amendment. Not only was the hated sedition reference gone, the revised draft made room for the word "reasonable." It was a small victory but no less significant in view of the fate suffered by due process. B. N. Rau, the Constitutional Advisor, led the move against due process.[63] Apparently, on a trip to the United States, Canada, Ireland, and England to consult with jurists on the constitution, he had met Justice Felix Frankfurter, who strongly advised against the due process clause. Vetoing legislations passed by the legislature, Justice Frankfurter thought, was too burdensome for the judiciary and could harm democracy. Under Rau's strong urging, the Drafting Committee redrafted Article 15 (Article 21 of the constitution) that offered protection of life and liberty. The Committee substituted liberty with personal liberty, thereby narrowing its scope. It also omitted reference to due process, replacing it with "procedure established by law." The redrafted Article 15

read: "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."[64]

The critics were quick to recognize what the change from due process to "procedure established by law" implied. It meant that the court would only be able to rule on whether a person was lawfully detained; the soundness of the law itself would be beyond judicial review. So, if the brute majority in the legislature enacted an unjust law under which a person was detained, the court's hands would be tied. Bhargava, who had previously forced an amendment to restrictions placed on Article 13, rose up again in opposition. He reminded the members that the British government had time and again detained Congress activists under "black laws," leaving the courts helpless to intervene.[65] Munshi vigorously argued for the retention of due process. For him, "the essence of democracy is that a balance must be struck between individual liberty on the one hand and social control on the other." However, "a majority in the legislature is more anxious to establish social control than to serve individual liberty." As to the argument that due process had caused great difficulties in the United States for social legislations that affected the right to property, he noted that this did not apply in India; the Draft Constitution had already omitted the application of due process to property rights. All that then mattered was the question of personal liberty. He acknowledged that emergency conditions obtained in the country, but warned that without the protection of courts "we will create a tradition which will ultimately destroy even whatever little of personal liberty which exists in this country."

So strong was the opposition that consideration of Article 15 was postponed. When it resumed, Ambedkar was on the fence.[66] He acknowledged the two widely different implications of the terms "procedure established by law" and "due process." One trusted the legislature to enact reasonable and just laws; the other did not. There was much to be said about both, making the choice difficult. "It is rather a case where a man has to sail between Charybdis and Scylla." He could not decide and left the choice to the House. The opposition had mounted a strong campaign for due process. But support for the proposed draft was solid. The measure passed. The leadership, however, was not done yet with seeking to equip the state with exceptional powers to constrain individual rights.

Laws of exception

The origin of laws of exception in India goes back to Bengal Regulation III introduced by the East India Company in 1818, which empowered it to detain indefinitely anyone suspected of criminal intent without allowing for judicial scrutiny of detention. Underlying this law was the Company's position as a conquering regime. Ruling over alien subjects, it could hardly represent its rule as founded in consent. But the Company set up courts and enacted laws to dress its sovereignty as the rule of law. Yet, it also saw itself surrounded by disaffection and sedition. The rule of law, therefore, required an exception. This is what Regulation III provided—an ability to lawfully suspend the law in exceptional circumstances. Throughout its existence, the

British used this maneuver to suspend *habeas corpus* lawfully. Citing war conditions, the British enacted the Defence of India Act in 1915 to combat the perceived threat from conspiracies. It was the extension and regularization of this wartime legislation into peacetime by the Rowlatt Act in 1919 that sparked Gandhi's first satyagraha and the General Dyer-led Jallianwala Bag massacre in Amritsar.[67] They returned to this emergency law during the Second World War by promulgating the Defence of India Rules.

In spite of the colonial genealogy of laws of exception, the nationalist elite wished to arm the new nation-state with emergency powers. Accordingly, Articles 275–280 of the Draft Constitution provided a series of provisions that empowered the President to declare Emergency and to suspend certain rights for its duration. Even before these articles came formally under discussion, members railed against the proposed suspension of constitutional remedies to enforce Fundamental Rights. But Ambedkar was unrelenting. He pointed out that only the individual rights of freedom, not all rights, were to be suspended under Emergency. This would be justified if the state's existence itself were in jeopardy. Without the state, there would be no individual freedom. He knew of no state that did not protect itself by curbing individual rights under emergency conditions.

The skirmish resumed when the Assembly met to formally discuss the Draft Constitution's emergency provisions in August 1949. M. V. Kamath spoke eloquently against Article 275 (Article 352 of the constitution), which empowered the President to declare emergency when faced by the threat of war, external aggression, or internal disturbance. He cited the example of the provision in the Weimar Constitution and its abuse by Hitler to impose Nazi dictatorship.[68] K. T. Shah expressed deep misgivings at the Draft Constitution's reference to the mere threat, and not the actual occurrence of war and internal disturbance, as sufficient for an emergency proclamation. This was no different than the British ordinances of 1942, which also made the mere threat of disturbance punishable. If the state now being constituted "is not distinguishable for its liberalism, for tolerance, for freedom of thought and expression to the citizen, from the previous Government," then all that would be different is "the complexion of rulers." Fighting words. But they were to no avail. With the sentiment for emergency powers strong in the Assembly, Article 275 was accepted.

Two other articles also caused consternation.[69] Article 279 (Article 358 of the constitution) proposed that no rights of freedom would restrict state action when Emergency was in force. Article 280 (Article 359 of the constitution) entitled the President to suspend constitutional remedies, including *habeas corpus*, during and six months beyond the Emergency's duration. Kamath once again voiced bruising criticism. He pointed out that the US constitution stipulated that the Congress had to authorize the suspension of rights. Furthermore, the US Supreme Court had the right to rule whether the conditions warranted the abrogation of rights. Suspension of rights was a grave matter, he argued, "even graver than the gravest emergency with which the state may be confronted." Another critic, Shibbal Lal Saksena, reminded the Assembly that even the British government did not suspend *habeas corpus* in prosecuting the activists of the 1942 rebellion. Several other members also opposed the suspension of rights, including the right to move the court. The criticisms were so

vociferous that Ambedkar moved that the discussion be postponed until the Drafting Committee had reconsidered it.

When the debate resumed, the summary suspension of constitutional remedies was gone in the redrafted article. However, it retained suspending the right to move the courts to enforce rights specifically mentioned in the Presidential proclamation.[70] Critics were not satisfied. Kamath thought that the redrafting had done what a Sanskrit proverb said about a person who sets out to sculpt the figure of God Ganesha but ends up producing the model of a monkey. Once again he cited the cautionary tale of Hitler's misuse of the Weimar constitution, and noted that the country had survived the troubles in Kashmir, Hyderabad, and elsewhere without emergency powers. But these objections were to no avail. Article 280 was adopted.

This was not the end of the drive to arm the state with laws of exception. A month after the inauguration of the republic on January 26, 1950, the provisional parliament passed the Preventive Detention Act.[71] The immediate provocation for it was the perceived threat of a communist insurgency. In 1948, the Communist Party of India (CPI) raised the slogan "*Yeh Azaadi Jhoothi Hai*" (This freedom is a lie). This was a line imposed by the Soviet Union in its developing Cold War confrontation with the United States. But it was not the only reason for the CPI's conflict with the Congress; the two had clashing views of independence.[72] As the communist leadership spearheaded the outbreak of postwar labor strikes and peasant movements, the Nehru-led interim government responded by promulgating the Industrial Disputes Act in 1947. This regularized the wartime measure of settling industrial disputes. The Congress formed the rival Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) to break the hold of the communist-dominated All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). The "police action" in Hyderabad took care of the Telangana peasant insurrection. The West Bengal government outlawed the CPI in 1948, placing hundreds of activists under detention under colonial-era laws. Undeterred, the communists went on a tear, organizing insurgencies in cities and the countryside.[73] Patel, with Nehru's concurrence, decided to apply the full force of the state machinery on the communists.

For the government, the immediate need for the legislation was that the validity of various laws of "small emergencies" was under challenge in High Courts.[74] Introducing it in the provisional parliament, Patel referred to these legal challenges. The problem was that a majority of the detenus were communists whose ideology and methods, he alleged, bore a "foreign stamp." Ordinarily, criminal law would suffice. But he added, quoting Motilal Nehru, "'when men would not be men and law would not be law,' we feel justified in invoking emergent and extraordinary laws."[75] As Home Minister and Deputy Premier, it was Patel's responsibility to move this legislation. But it was also fitting that it was the "Iron Man of India" who lent his considerable authority to passing the preventive detention law.

> Rugged Sardar Patel carries an air of stability. Look at his square, full face with its heavy-lidded eyes and fleshy lips. Observe his stocky body. In every line they reflect strength …. A quiet word from him is a command that goes to the limits of the Congress party …. It takes a brave Congressman to offend Patel.[76]

One member picked up courage to say that he rose with a heavy heart in support of what could be described as a "Black Bill" but for the fact that it had the backing of Nehru and Patel.[77] Patel was not amused. "I consider it a very light-hearted remark." He said that he had brought the legislation with a heavy heart. "When responsibility is placed on one to keep law and order and safeguard the liberties of millions of people … one has to take actions which are most detestable."[78] The provisional parliament fell in line. With just one day of discussion, the bill passed. Its validity was promised to expire on April 1, 1951. But this turned out to be an April Fool's joke. The PDA was amended and renewed several times until 1969, only to reappear as the dreaded MISA in 1971.

Balancing state power, democracy, and social change

The nationalist leaders crafted a constitution for a sinewy state not because they were authoritarian at heart but because of their anxiety as to whether India was yet a nation. Consider, for example, Ambedkar's wide-ranging speech before the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, in which he expressed his thoughts about democracy and nationhood. Democracy permitted the expression of different views and creeds. But what if people cared more for their narrow rather than general interests? After all, this had happened before. Here, he retold the standard Hindu nationalist narrative. India had previously lost its independence through treachery when local military commanders joined the invader Mohammed Bin Qasim. Jaichand had invited Mohammed Ghuri to invade India. And when "Shivaji was fighting for the liberation of the Hindus, other Maratha noblemen and the Rajput Kings were fighting on the side of Mughal Emperors …. Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which fills me with anxiety."[79]

Ambedkar was concerned because he did not think that India was a nation yet. "How can people divided into several thousand castes be a nation?" What India needed was a thorough social transformation, a removal of inequality. This belief underlay the oft-quoted lines in the same speech.

> On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions?

Without equality and fraternity, liberty would be meaningless. This was not a new sentiment for Ambedkar. For years he had railed against the deep social and economic inequality of caste embedded in Indian society through Hinduism.[80] The stranglehold of caste inequality meant that the society could not be reformed from within; only politics and political institutions could transform the deeply unequal social relations.[81] It is what motivated him to draft a constitution that abolished untouchability,

guaranteed equality irrespective of caste, and provided for various affirmative actions in education and employment for members of scheduled castes and tribes. These were to achieve the social and economic objectives of equality and fraternity. But this required that "we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha." Liberty, equality, and fraternity were to be instituted through constitutional means.

Here was another justification for a strong state. It would rely on coercive powers to secure the independent nation but also work to counter the danger posed by the "anti-national" caste system, through lawful and peaceful social transformation. The lawmakers accepted the idea that the constitution must provide the means for the eradication of caste discrimination and the oppression of Dalits. Accordingly, they placed the abolition of untouchability under Fundamental Rights. They also outlined an expansive constitutional vision for social welfare and justice, and economic transformation in drafting the Directive Principles of State Policy. Inspired by the Irish constitution, the Directive Principles laid out broad policies of social welfare and rights that the state was instructed to follow in making laws. Unlike Fundamental Rights, these were nonjusticiable. A strongly armed state was entrusted with the social project of bringing about India's transition from its backward past to a modern future.

The faith in the political to transform the social, Niraja Gopal Jayal reminds us, was not invented by the constitution; its roots went back to early twentieth-century Indian political thinkers. In their minds, the political was "the home of public reason and argumentation, while the social housed tradition and prejudice."[82] Echoing this faith, the Indian constitution makers opted for a powerful state. According to Uday Mehta, this broke from the American precedent and went along with the pattern set by the French Revolution.[83] The distinction between the two revolutions, originally drawn by Hannah Arendt, turned on the scope of political power. The American Revolution restricted political power, believing it to be the source of tyranny and corruption. Thus, social questions like slavery and the condition of Native Americans did not enter its constitutional discourse. The French revolution, on the other hand, licensed political power to redress material destitution and social inequality. Mehta suggests that India followed the French model, seeing political freedom as a promissory note toward full national unity, economic development, and social change. Once Indian leaders successfully ended imperial subjection, freedom became subsidiary to the goals of securing unity, social uplift, and international recognition. Accordingly, they framed a constitution to establish a state that would realize the modern nation through an ambitious project of social transformation and material progress. It was an all-powerful notion of politics and state power, unencumbered by judicial interference.

To accomplish their goals, the lawmakers also wrote the world's longest constitution. While providing Fundamental Rights, it specified detailed provisions under which the state could circumscribe rights, rather than leaving the matter to the legislature and the courts. Ambedkar justified it on grounds of "constitutional morality." Pratap Bhanu Mehta reads into this concept Ambedkar's deep commitment to the formal procedures of liberal democracy.[84] At its core, he suggests, was a liberal sentiment, a pledge to provide a framework for a democratic expression of plural views and interests.

Instituting these liberal democratic principles in India, however, posed a challenge. This was because the country, according to Ambedkar, lacked a general reverence for constitutional norms. "Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic."[85] Its hierarchy-ridden society could not be the source of constitutional morality. Nor could the legislature be entrusted with devising constitutional forms of governance, for it may enact undemocratic laws in the name of popular sovereignty. Constitutional norms, therefore, had to be inserted into the constitution itself. If this meant an extensive borrowing from the colonial 1935 Act, so be it. Implicit in Ambedkar's view was the project for a powerful pedagogic state that would tutor India in constitutional morality, freeing it from the inherited burdens of history and ushering in social equality.

The consequence was that the constitution spoke in two voices—that of the sovereign people and that of the administrator.[86] The first sought to fashion a constitutional path for social transformation. This produced Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. The administrator, on the other hand, harked back to colonialism; it spoke in a "language that was marked by anxiety, one that arose out of the unknowability of and the potential dangers posed by that vast alien population it was called on to govern."[87] Of course, the administrator of Independent India was not a colonial administrator. Once the colonial regime ended and adult suffrage was established, a break from the old despotism was in place. But the very plan of constitutional transformation required a powerful administrator, one that would limit protests and agitations within constitutional boundaries, and subject it to the demands of "law and order." This was to be accomplished by restrictions on Fundamental Rights, omission of due process, and Emergency provisions. Together, the two voices would secure equilibrium between constitutional rights of democracy and state power to administer social change and maintain law and order. It was all a fine balance, which bore the mark of anxiety at the Constitution's founding moment, and was to come apart in Indira Gandhi's Emergency in 1975.

Notes

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12 Ibid., 568.
13 Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 517.
14 David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule: Madras, 1859–1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 101.
15 Raghavan, *India's War*, 61, 72–76; see also Yasmin Khan, *India at War*, 18–33, 142–57, 284.
16 Raghavan, *India's War*, 320–55, provides a succinct account of the war economy.
17 See Kamtekar, "The End of the Colonial State," 56–64, for militarization and the war's impact on the economy. On the war economy's differential class impact, see his "A Different War Dance: State and Class in India 1939–1945." *Past and Present* 176 (2002): 187–221.
18 Phillips Talbot, *An American Witness to India's Partition* (Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007), 178.
19 Kamtekar, "The End of the Colonial State," 9.
20 Ishita Bannerjee Dube's *A History of Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 403–408, provides a broad survey of the postwar mass upsurge.
21 *TOP*, VI, No. 545; see Kamtekar, "End of the Colonial State," 83–112, on the postwar state crisis.
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60 B. Shiva Rao, III, 522.
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9

Making Universal Franchise and Democratic Citizenship in the Postcolonial Moment

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When Jawaharlal Nehru moved the resolution on the Aims and Objects of the Constituent Assembly just as it began the process of constitution-making in December 1946, he declared: "[o]bviously we are aiming at democracy and nothing less than a democracy … the fullest democracy I hope."[1] But becoming and remaining a democracy was by no means inevitable in the face of the mass killings and displacements of millions of people unleashed by the subcontinent's partition, and the country's widespread illiteracy, dire poverty, and profound religious, ethnic, and social divisions.[2] Moreover, Partition produced institutional practices and a series of executive ordinances for the control of the population that, far from advancing a democratic path, posited a challenge to the prospect of instituting democratic citizenship.[3] It also brought to the fore a vociferous ethno-nationalist discourse that strove to make India the state of the Hindus. How, under such adverse circumstances, were democratic citizenship and practices institutionalized in India? And how did a democratic political imaginary come to resonate at the juncture of independence with masses of people who had not previously experienced democracy?

Scholars have in the main explained the survival of India's democracy by exploring a range of constitutional, institutional, and policy safeguards and mechanisms, which enabled it to manage its religious, ethnic, and deep social diversity.[4] These explanations account for the endurance of democracy and democratic citizenship in India. But they offer little insight into its seemingly rapid and deep institutionalization under the difficult conditions of independence. Indeed, in a compelling essay on the historical inheritance of democracy in India, Sumit Sarkar writes that "the constituting of democratic structures amidst the turmoil of the late 1940s—has been so rarely posed."[5] This chapter attempts to explore how in the postcolonial moment, against the dire context of Partition, democracy and the idea of democratic citizenship captured the political imagination and was institutionalized in India.

I argue that a key driving force in making a democratic imaginary tangible and in institutionalizing democratic citizenship in India was the preparation from September 1947 of the preliminary draft electoral roll on the basis of universal franchise for the first election that was compiled in anticipation of the new constitution. This electoral

roll would become the foundation for building an electoral democracy for the new state. Moreover, the preparation of the roll dealt in the most concrete way with the question of "who is an Indian," since a prospective voter had to be a citizen.

The adoption of universal adult franchise was agreed on at the beginning of the constitutional debates.[6] At independence, however, it was not obvious at all that giving the vote to all adults would resonate successfully with an electorate of over 173 million people, 49 percent of the country's population at the time, about 85 percent of whom had never voted for their political representatives in a legislative assembly and a vast majority of whom were poor and illiterate. The decision to undertake the preparation of the rolls for the first elections on the basis of adult franchise from September 1947, while the Partition was unfolding, was, therefore, India's major transformative move toward democratization.[7] In doing so, Indians embarked on a process of decolonizing their democracy, imagining it for themselves. They acted on this imaginary, and made it a political reality.

India's successful first elections took place between October 25, 1951, and February 21, 1952.[8] But the overwhelming and complex preparatory work for the elections, in particular the actual preparation of the first draft electoral roll on the basis of adult franchise, had begun in September 1947. Before that "stupendous" administrative task was handed over in March 1950 to the first chief election commissioner of India, it was designed and managed over the preceding two and a half years by a small, newly formed interim bureaucratic body of the state in the making: the Constituent Assembly Secretariat (hereafter, CAS), under the close guidance of the Constitutional Advisor, B. N. Rau.[9]

The preparation of the draft electoral roll on the basis of universal franchise two years before the enactment of the constitution was entangled with the question of citizenship because being a citizen of India was a basic qualifying criterion for being an eligible voter. The preparation of the preliminary roll for the first elections was principally based on the anticipatory citizenship provisions in the Draft Constitution of February 1948. The enrollment throughout the country in anticipation of the constitution engendered, in turn, struggles over citizenship. This process and the struggles for democratic citizenship that emanated from it provided the opportunity for people and public officials at all levels to engage with democratic institution building and to contest various exclusivist trends to be found at the margins of the Constituent Assembly debates. The quality of the engagement and the response to the contestations, the suggestions and questions that arose in the process, as well as the language that these interactions produced, democratized the political imagination. These contestations, over membership in the nation through the pursuit of a "place on the roll," I argue, also gave a practical basis to the conceptions and principles of democratic citizenship that were debated at the time in the process of constitution-making from above.

This chapter focuses on the question of the registration of Partition refugees as voters, an issue that was a draft constitutional challenge and that led to numerous contestations over citizenship in the early stages of the making of the electoral roll. Refugees were on the fault line of "who is an Indian" both in the citizenship draft article and in the preparation of the roll. The chapter examines the struggles for citizenship that arose in

relation to the enrollment of the refugees in West Bengal and Assam. These struggles, in the main, were conducted through ongoing correspondences between a wide range of citizens' organizations, the CAS, and administrators at the provincial levels. In that context, various organizations deliberated over the Draft Constitution and adopted its language. They also made resolutions on its basis and even enacted some draft-constitutional provisions in order to establish their democratic citizenship rights. As a result of this process, the abstract language and forms of the democratic constitution in the making began to strike roots among the population at large. People's struggles and claims of the state on the basis of the draft constitutional framework served, in turn, to entrench the constitution. Moreover, in this process both the bureaucracy, at the provincial and local level, and the citizenry were tutored into adult franchise as a basis for democratic citizenship and into electoral democracy.

The first section examines the challenge that arose in relation to the registration of the refugees as voters and the way it was dealt with by both citizens' organizations and the CAS. The second section explores the struggles for citizenship and franchise rights that emerged on the ground in the preparation of the draft electoral roll and that were informed by a variety of exclusionary practices in relation to refugees and immigrants. The third section looks at the ways the CAS dealt with these struggles. In doing so, it analyzes the implications of the struggles for franchise and citizenship rights in the context of the enrollment of the refugees and the responses to them for democratization and democratic state building.

The challenge of registering Partition refugees

Although the evolving provisions for citizenship were still being drafted, they were the basis for the preparation of the preliminary electoral roll.[10] The instructions for enrollment set out that every citizen of or above twenty-one years of age who is not otherwise disqualified by reason of nonresidence, unsoundness of mind, crime, or corrupt practice shall be entitled to register on the electoral roll.[11] A voter should have a place of residence in the electoral unit for a period of no less than 180 days in the year ending on March 31, 1948 (i.e., no later than September 30, 1947).[12] As for citizenship, "For the present," it was stated, "the definition of citizen in Article 5 of the Draft Constitution may be adopted."[13]

The citizenship provisions, formulated and set in articles 5 and 6 of the Draft Constitution of February 1948, laid down birth, descent, and domicile as criteria for citizenship.[14] Article 5(a) set citizenship at the date of the commencement of the constitution by birth and descent in the territory of the new state to everyone, barring those who left after April 1, 1947, to make their permanent abode in any foreign state.[15] Article 5(b) provided in very wide terms an Indian citizenship, by birth and descent (up to grand-parents), to anyone who was born in the "Greater colonial India"—India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935, as long as they have their domicile in the newly constituted India. The draft article made provisions for the needs of the large number of displaced persons from greater India, including Pakistan. It provided for them an "easy mode" of acquiring domicile, and thereby citizenship. It

was sufficient for a person to declare in the office of the District Magistrate that he desired such a domicile, provided that he has resided in the territory of India for at least one month before his declaration. Such declarations, however, could in practice only be made once the constitution came into force.[16]

Soon after the detailed instructions for the preparation of the rolls were disseminated, in mid-March 1948, and provincial governments began issuing their instructions to local administrators, letters began arriving at the CAS, asking whether and how refugees should be enrolled. Indeed, refugees' citizenship and residential status—two key qualifying criteria for registration as voters—were unclear and soon became a contested matter. According to the prescribed residency qualification, a voter had to reside in the place where he would register from September 30, 1947, at the latest. But a large number of the refugees migrated after September 30, 1947. Moreover, waves of returnees from Pakistan who left during the violence in late 1947 were now coming back to India.[17]

The CAS acknowledged that "[t]he residential qualification of 180 days up to March 31, 1948, will cause hardship to refugees … for reason beyond their control. … Some concession will have to be made for the refugees otherwise a large number of persons will be left out."[18] Seeking a solution to the question of refugees' registration, the Secretariat decided at the beginning of their discussions on the subject that "the refugee problem will have to be tackled on an all-India basis."[19] The Under Secretary of the CAS commented that "there is also the question of their citizenship to be considered."[20] From May to July 1948, the Secretariat engaged, among other things, with the task of "finding a suitable formula regarding the residential qualifications of refugee voters."[21]

In the meantime, letters of complaint from a wide range of citizens' organizations began arriving at the Secretariat, indicating that the provisions and directions that they issued in the pursuit of universal franchise were challenged by evolving distinct exclusionary practices on the ground in the preparation of the roll. Many organizations raised questions and concerns over the refugees' registration as voters and their citizenship status.[22] There were also various queries from officials in the provinces about difficulties that surfaced.

The President of the East Bengal Minority Welfare Central Committee, Calcutta, wrote that "certain points mentioned in the Press reports regarding residence qualification and a few provisions in the Draft Constitution regarding citizenship, voting rights, etc. have created considerable apprehension among a large section of the people living in West Bengal and Assam but originally hailing from territories now in Pakistan."[23] The Committee pointed out that because no arrangements were made as yet by the Government of India or by any provincial government for receiving declarations for citizenship as set in article 5(b) of the Draft Constitution, "any preparation of electoral rolls may be seriously prejudicial to the interests of the Immigrants."[24] The Committee suggested that interim instructions for receiving declarations of domicile as envisaged in Article 5(b) of the Draft Constitution should be issued immediately. Additionally, they cautioned that unless new "definite" directions were given with respect to the residential qualification of 180 days, "the immigrants from Pakistan are likely to be omitted from the Draft Electoral Rolls

now to be prepared."[25] The Committee suggested in this regard that the question of residence "should be very leniently applied at least in the preparation of the first electoral rolls. Mere declaration as to intention of residence should be accepted as residential qualification."[26] The Committee also reported that in some parts of Assam attempts were being made to leave out the immigrants from the electoral rolls.

Indeed, several letters referred to a circular that the Reforms Commissioner of Assam issued on May 28, 1948, to all district officers, containing detailed instructions for them and their staff regarding the preparation of the electoral roll.

> The Government desires to draw your personal attention with regard to the floating and "non-resident" population of the District. These people are not qualified to be registered as voters. They may be staying with friends, relatives or as refugees or labourers. Great caution will be necessary on the part of your staff to see that not a single individual of this class manages to creep into the electoral roll by any chance.[27]

In his subsequent circular, the Reforms Commissioner emphasized that the reference to "residence" in the instructions for the preparation of the roll "means residence of a citizen. Citizenship comes first and residence next … Citizenship will have to be first established before one can acquire franchise."[28]

Angry letters about the Reforms Commissioner and Assam government asked the CAS to "appreciate it [this circular's] inherent defects which will vitally vitiate preparation of Electoral Roll," and demanded immediate rectification.[29] The letter added:

> The Constituent Assembly entrusted to draft the constitution should take note of the above to realise how simple provisions under the constitution could be misconstrued and how persons holding responsible positions may fail to implement the provisions of the constitution in accordance to its spirit and may even defeat its purpose by issuing directions that will lead to a negation of the fundamental conception of adult suffrage.[30]

"You will find," stated another letter, "that attempts are being made to exclude all persons who were not born in Assam as constituted now."[31] The concerns and uncertainty over the citizenship and franchise rights of the refugees were also expressed in the press.[32]

Seeking an all-India solution to the question of the refugees' registration, members of the CAS initially explored international precedents. A member of the CAS looked at how European countries dealt with the refugee problem since the beginning of the First World War and in the wake of the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire.[33] His report concluded, however, that "in the countries where automatic naturalization of the refugees took place, it could not be ascertained whether the residential qualifications for election purposes was also relaxed. There is no book or document available, which deals with this minute question."[34] The Under Secretary pointed out that "the refugees are always on the move, and, therefore, no residential

qualification can be prescribed for them, if they are to be given the right of vote in the next elections."[35]

The matter was forwarded to the Constitutional Advisor for his opinion. Rau's position was that since the electoral rolls under preparation were the preliminary rolls, "[t]here should, therefore, be no objection to 'refugees' being registered in the rolls, for their province, on a mere declaration by them of their intention to reside permanently in the town or village concerned."[36] Rau asked the Joint Secretary of the CAS to examine this suggestion. Upon further deliberations, the CAS decided by July 13, 1948, to register all refugees in the electoral rolls at this stage "on mere declaration by them of their intention to reside permanently in the town or village concerned irrespective of the actual period of residence."[37] The new directives on the enrollment of refugees, which the CAS sent to all provinces and states, mentioned that such enrollment is liable to revision in due time in accordance with electoral law when enacted.[38] A detailed explanatory press note in the matter was issued on July 15, 1948.[39]

The new instructions, however, prompted further questions and uncertainties. The Government of West Bengal wrote to the CAS asking for a definition of who is a "refugee", whether the declaration to be made by a refugee should be oral or in writing, whether "such a declaration dispenses with the declaration required under clause (b) of Article 5 of the Draft Constitution, or whether it is to be made independently of the latter."[40]

In response, the Secretariat devised a uniform definition of a "refugee." The CAS decided that "'Refugee' with reference to any Province or State means a person who has migrated into the Province or State on account of disturbances in his usual place of residence."[41] On July 26, 1948, the CAS sent further instructions to all provinces and states, providing for the uniform definition of a "refugee." It clarified that a refugee declaration should be in writing before "any responsible Officer" not necessarily before a District Magistrate. These instructions moreover explained the distinction between a refugee declaration for registration as a voter and the declaration required under clause (ii) of the explanation to Article 5 of the Draft Constitution, which related to citizenship, and which "cannot be made until auxiliary action referred to in the footnote on page 4 of the Draft Constitution has been taken."[42]

Despite the CAS's attempts at clarification, both officials and members of the public became confused. Many conflated the declaration for the registration of a refugee as a voter with the declaration that was required for acquiring domicile and thereby citizenship. In both the official and the public mind, the two were sometimes believed to be synonymous. This mix-up, together with other distinct forms of exclusionary practices on the ground in the registration of refugees, generated struggles for democratic citizenship rights.

Struggles for citizenship

This confusion between registration as a voter and registration for citizenship led the West Bengal Government, for example, to hastily initiate registration of refugees

as citizens. On July 20, 1948, the Government of West Bengal issued an order that declarations under Article 5 of the Draft Constitution should be made in the form of affidavits on an embossed stamp paper of 2 rupees.[43] The CAS received several complaints against these orders. The Bengal Displaced Lawyers' Association, for example, claimed that this order "cannot be legally supported."[44] In their view, demanding of the refugees to file an affidavit and the court stamp fee will exclude a large number of persons entitled to vote and will thus frustrate the object of the preliminary preparation of the electoral rolls.[45]

Conversely, some organizations issued complaints against their local government for not registering citizens and sought help in the matter from the CAS. "The Government of Assam," wrote the Chairman of the Assam Refugees' Association, Shillong, unlike the Government of West Bengal, "is doing nothing uptil [*sic*] now and pretending absence of instructions from the centre in regard to the declaration of acquiring citizenship in Indian dominion. … The time is too short … we are afraid a majority of our people will fail to acquire citizenship … We in Assam are quite in the dark and we have no organization to influence the central government in the matter until and unless you come forward to our help."[46] The Chairman of the Assam Refugees' Association referred to the forms for registration of citizenship that were issued in Calcutta and asked whether they are to be accepted. Some organizations demanded to link voters' registration with the acquisition of citizenship. The Assam Citizens' Association Dhubri wrote to the CAS that "in view of the fact that the work of enrolling voters is proceeding apace, this meeting urges on the government to immediately prescribe the procedure for making and depositing the declaration for citizenship."[47] The Assam Citizens' Association Mangaldai decided "to take a census of all persons entitled to citizenship and also to see that they submit the requisite declaration for citizenship."[48]

Indeed, in the context of the preparation of the preliminary electoral rolls, securing citizenship and franchise rights became the raison d'être of bourgeoning citizens' organizations. For example, a public meeting held in Digboi, Assam, on July 26, 1948, resolved that:

> An association to be called the "Citizens' Association, Digboi" be formed with the following objects: (a) To acquire citizenship rights and to promote and protect the civil rights of citizens. (b) To safe-guard the right of franchise. (c) To promote omity [*sic*—amity], goodwill and co-operation among different communities.[49]

Likewise, the Assam Citizens' Association Mangaldai defined its main objectives as follows:

> (1) To promote and protect the civic rights of all citizens and to safeguard their right of franchise as guaranteed by the new constitution. (2) To promote their general wellbeing. (3) To strive for the welfare of Assam. (4) To cultivate and maintain good feeling amongst all citizens.[50]

Many of these organizations sought affiliation with each other. They disseminated their "constitutional opinions" about voter and citizenship rights of refugees and

immigrants by sending copies of their letters to the CAS, the Constitutional Advisor, and even to the President of the Constituent Assembly and Nehru. Unsurprisingly, the contents of the letter of one citizens' organization were sometimes reproduced verbatim by other organizations.[51]

Generally, citizen organizations, determined to secure their right of franchise and citizenship, examined critically the CAS's solution for the registration of the refugees as voters. Thus, the East Bengal Minority Welfare Central Committee, Calcutta, wrote to the President of the Constituent Assembly, Rajendra Prasad:

> We note with pleasure and gratitude that the 180 day's residential qualification has been dispensed with so far as preliminary rolls are concerned …. But there is no guarantee that this inclusion will acquire for them the right of voting. … The relief, therefore, is more illusionary than real. … While feeling grateful to you … allow us to say that we irresistible [sic] feel that this is no guarantee, but only a pious and kind wish…. We are entitled to know what is the present intention of the government on this question. … an adult evacuee must be considered eligible to be a voter. … We should have vision first and revision afterwards.[52]

It was the vision embedded in the anticipated new constitution that citizens' organizations now vigorously pursued in their struggles for franchise and citizenship rights. Various organizations deliberated and used the language of the Draft Constitution. They also made resolutions on its basis and even enacted some draft constitutional provisions in order to establish their citizenship.

Thus, the Servants of Bengal Society, who were keen advocates of citizenship and voting rights for the refugees in their midst, objected to the fee the West Bengal Government charged for the declarations for citizenship. They took the initiative of issuing their own forms for that purpose instead. They sent a sample form to the Constitutional Advisor, explaining that they devised the form on the basis of Article 5 (b) of the Draft Constitution "read with the instruction of the Secretariat of the Constituent Assembly supported by the public statement of Dr. Rajendra Prasad."[53] They stated that "[m]ore than a lakh [100,000] of East Bengal refugees anxious to acquire Indian citizenship" applied with this form to the District Magistrates of West Bengal.[54] They asked Rau to "please consider the matter from the point of view of the West Bengal refugees who have already filed their declarations in the attached form and inform us immediately if the declaration is in order."[55]

Similarly, the Committee for Acquiring Indian Citizenship Jamshedpur, Bihar, wrote to the CAS that after "much persuasion the District Magistrate kindly agreed to receive Declarations [of citizenship] and kept it pending in the file but [he] could not give any guarantee regarding its acceptance."[56] They asked for the CAS to provide instructions.

The struggles for citizenship and franchise rights were furthermore informed by the instructions for the registration of refugees that provincial governments issued to their staff. The Government of Assam, for example, set a court-fee stamp of the value

of eight annas to be affixed on the declarations to be filled by refugees for inclusion in the preliminary electoral rolls, even though no fee was stipulated to the order to relax refugees' registration on the roll.[57] It also set that such declarations should be made in writing before the circle sub-deputy collector before September 30, 1948.[58] In his confidential instructions on the enrollment of the refugees, the Reforms Commissioner of Assam directed officers to "verify that the declarant is actually a refugee."[59] Thus, on the refugee declaration form that he devised, the declarant was required to provide information about the province, district, and thana from where he arrived, and the month of arrival, in order to ascertain "as far as possible the actual happening of the disturbing event or events as the cause or probable cause of migration."[60]

Numerous citizens' organizations across Assam held emergency meetings upon the publication of these instructions. They submitted their resolutions, complaints, and suggestions to the CAS. Generally, citizens' associations were of the view that the Government of Assam's instructions "will have the inevitable affect [*sic*] of disenfranchising the majority of the refugees, though it is very complacently said that the intention is to give the refugees all possible facilities for enrolment as voters."[61] The Assam Bengalee Association warned that unless modified, the Assam procedure for the registration of refugees will "nullify the intent and purpose of the declared object of the Govt. of India for granting citizenship right to the refugees in an easier method."[62] The *Hindustan Standard* wrote that the Reforms Commissioner "issued instructions in flagrant violation of the principle and procedure … and has not hesitated even to indulge in sheer nonsense in order to prevent what any officer of average intelligence might otherwise do in fulfillment of his duties as an enumerator."[63]

Specifically, citizens' organizations demanded, first, the cancellation of the court-fee charge, claiming that it was an economic blow for the refugees. Second, they asked that the male heads of household be allowed to file a declaration on behalf of his wife and other women in the family, explaining that a large number of women were purdanashin and that it was impossible for a pregnant woman to appear in person.[64] Third, citizens' organizations demanded to extend the time limit for the submission of declarations. "It is apprehended," wrote the Assam Bengalee Association, "that most innocent refugees who *have not adequate sense of civic duties* and who might have settled in out of the way places are still in the dark and may be deprived of the chance of becoming citizens of India."[65]

Struggles for a place on the roll were also driven by infringements in the actual registration of the refugees. Citizens' organizations reported in detail about the misconduct of specific local officials. Thus, the Tinsukia Bengali Association complained that although the deputy commissioner's directives specified that declarations were to be accepted on September 4, 1948, until 3:00 p.m., the Sub-Divisional Commissioner (SDC), who was authorized to receive declarations, stopped working at 1:15 p.m. A few hundred refugees, "including about a hundred ladies," were waiting to file declarations "in the scorching sun for hours."[66]

In some cases, local authorities raised difficulties and refused to register refugees by devising ad hoc, sometimes capricious, procedures and definitions of a "refugee." Thus,

for example, according to a complaint of the Assam Citizen Association Nowgong, in both Hojai and Dabeka, Assam, the Sub-Deputy Collector refused to receive the declaration forms from refugees because, in his view, "those who live under a shed cannot be called refugees, and that refugees were only those who had to live under the trees or on the road … or in the station platforms."[67] The Sub-Deputy Collector's other contentions were that the "Government is not a charitable institution that it should maintain people from Eastern Pakistan" and "that the Hindus from Eastern Pakistan have come here to convert Assam into a 'BANGAKISTAN'."[68]

In the contestations over the refugees' place on the electoral roll, rivaling conceptions of membership in the nation surfaced. In Assam, for example, ethno-nationalist attitudes manifested particularly toward the non-Assamese "floating population," many of who were Hindus from East Pakistan. Local authorities expressed a view of membership in the state that was defined by a descent group and delimited to the "children of the soil," who were eligible to have full rights. Thus, ethno-nationalist conceptions were not necessarily on the basis of religion. By contrast, in West Bengal, as far as the preparation of the preliminary roll was concerned, "any person who would state that he has domicile in the Indian Union was to be straightaway included in the roll."[69] At the same time, the notion of a unitary all-Indian citizenship across the forging new territory was not yet clearly understood. Indeed, some citizen organizations asked of the CAS to clarify whether people who have come to a province from other provinces of the Indian dominion and have made their abode there required to submit declaration for citizenship rights.[70]

In these struggles, citizens' organizations fought for and defended their future democratic franchise and citizenship rights with great passion. They debated and adopted the draft form of the constitution, particularly its articles on citizenship; they rehearsed its language, and sometimes even, albeit without legal basis, enacted its provisions. They inspected vigilantly their government's instructions for enrollment, compared them with those issued by the CAS and other governments and consciously strove to cultivate a "good feeling amongst all citizens,"[71] and a "sense of civic duties" among the people.[72] In this process, a wide range of organizations entered into ongoing discussions on democratic Indian citizenship with the CAS, as well as with their local authorities. They sought remedial actions from the CAS. In making the universal franchise, democratic citizenship became a subject of discussion, which administrators at various levels now had to contend with, and were consequently mentored into by the CAS.

Mentoring into an electoral democracy

Confronted with disparate exclusionary practices in the registration of the refugees on the ground, the Secretariat of the Constituent Assembly became the principal guarantor of an inclusive conception of membership in the process of the making of the electoral roll. In the provisions the Secretariat devised, particularly for refugees, everyone was granted equal membership. Although these provisions were tentative, enacted in anticipation of the relevant laws, and were therefore liable to revision. The conception

of citizenship and equality of membership that underlay the relaxed provisions for refugees' enrollment, on the basis of their mere declaration, went beyond traditional liberalism. It was a concept of membership and equality that allowed for differential treatment in order to address the special situation of some prospective members of the nation, thus reflecting the values and common good intended by universal franchise. In this spirit, the CAS extended its activity to ensure the capability of the prospective citizens to become voters and legitimately authorize their government.

The staff of the CAS acted with accountability. They acknowledged the receipt of all letters and responded, often in great detail, to explain the procedures and the actions that were taken or that already took place. Before replying, they considered each and every letter.[73] They acted rapidly to rectify faulty procedures. In doing so, they can be said to have mentored bureaucrats and the public in the institutional and procedural principles of an electoral democracy.

Thus, upon receiving information that the Government of West Bengal issued an order that declarations for citizenship should be made in the form of affidavits, the Secretariat sent forthwith an explanatory letter about their misconstrued instructions.[74] The CAS also invited the Joint Secretary to the Government of West Bengal for discussions in Delhi, to explain their policy and clarify the confusion over the declarations under Article 5 of the Draft Constitution. Subsequently, the Government of West Bengal cancelled and replaced its order, explaining that such declaration could not be made until auxiliary action is taken, and directed that "Affidavits hitherto filled by persons ostensibly in terms of Explanation (ii) to Article 5 (b) of the Draft Constitution [should be] returned to them free of charge whenever asked for."[75]

In the face of the growing confusion between the declarations for the registration of refugees as voters and the declarations for acquiring citizenship, as well as attempts to enact the draft constitutional citizenship provisions, the CAS produced an explanatory reply note on the question of citizenship. It wrote to citizens' organizations that the declaration under clause (ii) of the Explanation to Article 5 of the Draft Constitution cannot be made until auxiliary action has been taken; that all persons who want to benefit from such declarations will get an opportunity to do so before the commencement of the Constitution and the revisions of the rolls; and that the declarations of domicile referred to in Article 5 relate to the acquisition of the rights of citizenship of the Indian Union and are distinct from the declarations which refugees are required to make for getting themselves registered as voters in the draft electoral rolls which were under preparation.[76] In practice, the CAS became the authority on the constitutional position of "who is an Indian."[77]

The CAS reacted swiftly and thoroughly to abuses of authority in relation to refugees' registration. It redressed problems that arose with local governments' directives and forms for the registration of the refugees, and indeed oversaw that corrective actions were taken. The CAS, as already mentioned, even summoned senior officials who breached or bent the CAS's instructions to Delhi for meetings. These officials were given the opportunity to explain their actions. After the meeting, the CAS would issue minutes of these meetings with clarifications, corrections, and adjustments that were mutually agreed upon. For example, at a meeting with the Reforms Commissioner of

Assam, who was summoned following several complaints from citizens' organizations in Assam, he was asked to withdraw the court-fee charge he imposed on refugee declarations. He agreed to extend the deadline for the declarations of refugees to October 31, 1948, and to give due publicity to this extension. He also agreed that "in the case of women it would be enough if their husbands or parents sign the declarations on their behalf," as suggested by the CAS and as was requested by numerous citizens' organizations on behalf of the women.[78] The CAS asked for a report on the actions agreed at their meeting.[79] Accordingly, within a fortnight the Reforms Commissioner of Assam issued new revised instructions to all district officers, as well as a new form for a refugee declaration.

Moreover, following the discussions the CAS held in Delhi with the Joint Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, the Deputy Secretary to the government sent a comprehensive note on what they understood "to be correct procedure intended to be observed in the preparation of the Draft Electoral Rolls … as well as on the implications of the distinction meant to be drawn between a citizen as defined in Article 5 of the draft Constitution and a voter for the purpose of such elections."[80] They asked for the CAS's opinion on the note, so that the enumerators and other supervision officers could be instructed "on the proper lines."[81]

Finally, the CAS also made inquiries into complaints about specific incidents of abuse in the registration of the refugees. It thus asked the Reforms Commissioner of Assam to account for such occurrences, for example when Sub-Deputy Collectors did not show up according to the published schedule to register refugees.[82] The Reforms Commissioner investigated the complaints with his district officers, deputy commissioners, and sub-deputy collectors. He sent a detailed report to the CAS and assured that remedial actions were taken.[83]

The CAS also made the public aware of their activities. On September 25, 1948, the CAS published a detailed explanatory press note that clarified for the sake of "ensuring uniformity" the definition of a "refugee" and their registration.[84] The press note explained the distinction between the declaration for the purpose of citizenship under Article 5 in the Draft Constitution, which awaited auxiliary legislation and could therefore not yet be made, and the registration as voter. It also referred to the misleading orders of the West Bengal and Assam governments, and emphasized that it was never intended that a fee should be imposed on refugee registration, and that these orders were therefore withdrawn. Thereafter, the CAS sent a batch of detailed response letters to the numerous citizens' organizations that awaited a reply, answering their queries, and informing them about the decisions that were taken in the wake of their inquiries and complaints.[85]

Henceforth, the CAS regularly asked provincial authorities to respond to written inquiries from citizens' organizations. It forwarded these letters to local authorities with a proposed draft reply and asked to be endorsed with a copy. In doing so, the Secretariat delegated authority to provincial officials and strengthened their competence; it also created a mechanism for overseeing their activities while endeavoring to achieve as much uniformity in the implementation of the procedures for the preparation of the rolls as possible. The CAS did not simply issue orders. Instead, it tended to offer advice. Thus, for example, when asking the Government

of Bihar to reply to a letter from the Committee for Acquiring Indian Citizenship, Jamshedpur, the CAS wrote: "the Committee may also be told that."[86] Provincial governments often copied the CAS's proposed draft reply in their responses.

Moreover, the all-inclusive practices and conception of membership that the CAS developed around the registration of refugees in the preliminary electoral roll offered an alternative discourse to the ethno-nationalist political language, and institutional practices that were also being enforced in relation to refugees at that time beyond the process of roll making.[87] The political vocabulary of these exclusionary ordinances and policies distinguished between a displaced person, an evacuee, and an intending evacuee, by implication creating categories of "good" and "bad" refugees.[88] In contrast, in the enrollment process all were simply "refugees" on a basis of a uniform definition.

Notwithstanding the CAS's inclusionary efforts, clarifying press notes, substantial correspondence with citizens' organizations, and its remedial measures, struggles for citizenship and a place on the roll, and infringements in the registration of the refugees did occur. In some cases, the initial instructions of provincial governments continued to be used on the ground, despite having been revoked and replaced by new orders. Revised instructions sometimes took time to trickle down. The CAS continued to look into directives issued in the provinces and the states, which citizens' organizations reported on. It asked of administrators for clarifications and corrective actions. The CAS's supervision through repeated correspondences with local authorities did not always simply yield immediate success. Yet this ongoing dialogical process between the CAS, administrators at the local level, and the prospective citizen-electorate became a key factor in instituting democratic citizenship and stimulated a process of building electoral democracy.

Conclusion

Citizens' organizations articulated a range of arguments, including constitutional ones, in their pursuit of securing citizenship and franchise rights for refugees. The set of instructions for the relaxation of the residential qualification for the refugees, on the one hand, and the subsequent directives that some provincial governments issued, based on their interpretation of the CAS's instructions, on the other hand, fed into the struggles over citizenship. In conducting these struggles, numerous citizens' organizations followed closely the CAS's and local governments' instructions, press notes, and gazette reports. They monitored the directives and actions of their local government, paying attention to small details, and were quick to demand remedies when they thought their rights or the CAS's instructions were infringed. Significantly, these citizens' organizations were aware of each other and made continuous efforts to coordinate their resolutions and actions. They compared notes, sent copies of their letters to the CAS to other citizens' organizations, and sought affiliation with one another. As already mentioned, sometimes the content of a letter from one citizen organization was repeated verbatim by another. The efforts to liaise and work together meant that struggles for citizenship were persistent and not simply sporadic initiatives. In doing so, people engaged in overseeing the way they were governed.

Thus, while the citizenship article at that time was discussed behind the closed door of the Constitution Drafting Committee and the Special Committee, citizenship was also made and contested on the ground. The dynamics of struggles around roll making had, in effect, established temporal citizenship. As the illustrations above suggest, people expressed growing and passionate interest in their franchise and citizenship rights. As part of collectives they debated their future citizenship, but essentially already acted as engaged citizens. The responsiveness of the CAS in dealing with the problem of the registration of the refugees empowered them to do so.

The preparation of the draft electoral roll on the basis of universal adult franchise created facts on the ground—conceptually, emotionally, and practically—that constrained the extent to which the work that was done over two years, in anticipation of the new constitution, could simply be reversed.

Subsequently, when the motion on the preparation of the electoral roll came before the Constituent Assembly for the first time in January 1949, more than a year after the work started and a number of provinces finalized their preliminary roll, the procedural constitutional principles that were brought before the Assembly had already been tested and implemented on the ground.[89] The concerns that members of the Constituent Assembly raised in the debate, among them, for example, difficulties that may arise with regard to the registration of refugees, were already addressed and dealt with. The Assembly's resolution essentially confirmed the rules made up so far. The CAS did not issue further instructions regarding the preparation of the rolls in pursuance of the resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly.

Finding a solution for the registration of the refugees on an all-India basis was a first test to the making of the universal franchise. The absence of legal precedents in relation to the "minute question" of refugees' residential qualifications for the purpose of election rendered significant the need for a creative yet principled approach. The way the Secretariat solved problems under conditions of great uncertainty, against the backdrop of a Draft Constitution and in the absence of even a draft election law exhibited flexibility, but it was not ad-hoc or arbitrary. They were continuously in pursuit of precedents or ensured to set new ones. They drafted templates of principled and detailed explanatory answers to queries from local governments and citizens' organizations, which were based on the Draft Constitution. Thus, even before the enactment of the constitution, the Secretariat demonstrated through their daily practices the value and meaning of the constitution and the potential quality of democratic power. Indeed, people at the margins—like the refugees—successfully made claims of the state and were taken into account. The CAS also strengthened provincial authority by mentoring administrators and delegating responsibility.

It was, however, the terms and style of engagement, which the CAS developed that contributed to foster the idea of democratic citizenship in the political imagination of people and administrators. For a start, the CAS took seriously citizens' organizations grievances, queries, and suggestions. Indeed, some of its decisions in redressing problems were aligned with proposals that some organizations put forward. Moreover, the CAS was authentic and transparent in their correspondences, repeating, sometimes word for word, their internal notes or content of letters they sent to provincial authorities. The internal office notes, the official letters to provincial and

state authorities, and replies to letters from the public were entirely consistent and based on identical wording. These principles and practices that the CAS developed and instilled in administering the first steps of making the universal franchise, particularly the way it tackled the question the refugees' registration, contributed to developing democracy in India at its "fullest," from its inception.

Notes

1 Lok Sabha Secretariat, *Constituent Assembly Debates: Official Report*, Vol. I (Henceforth *CAD*), New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2003 (fourth print), 62. A version of this chapter is published in Ornit Shani, *How India Became Democratic: Citizenship and the Making of the Universal Franchise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

2 Bruce Ackerman comments that India, "by the standard criteria of political science, should never have been able to sustain constitutional democracy." Bruce Ackerman, "The Rise of World Constitutionalism." *Virginia Law Review* 83 (1997): 781.

3 Among these ordinances were, for example, the permit system (Permit Ordinances, July 14, 1948), the Influx from West Pakistan Control Act from July 19, 1948. Additional policies were, for example, the evacuee property laws. Much of these ordinances resulted in the dispossession of masses of India's Muslim population. See Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007): 126–40; Joya Chatterji, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946–1970." *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 4 (2012): 1049–71; Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012).

4 Among others, see Sudipta Kaviraj, "Democracy and Development in India," in *Democracy and Development: Proceedings of the IEA Conferences Held in Barcelona, Spain*, ed. Amiya Kumar Bagchi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 92–137; Arend Lijphart, "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation." *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 2 (1996): 258–68; Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1997); Ashutosh Varshney, "Why Democracy Survives?" *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 3 (1998): 36–50; Atul Kohli, ed., *The Success of India's Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (London: Pan Books, 2008); Alfred Stepan, Juan Linz and Yogendra Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations. India and Other Multinational Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

5 Sumit Sarkar, "Indian Democracy: The Historical Inheritance," in *The Success of India's Democracy*, ed. Atul Kohli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 23. Sarkar refers to the research neglect of "the transition across the 1947 divide," which historians have since begun to address. See, for example, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rochona Majumdar, Andrew Sartori, eds., *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial. India and Pakistan in Transition* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007); Taylor C. Sherman, William Gould, and Sarah Ansari, eds., *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 1 (2011).

6 Interim Report of the Advisory committee on the Subject of Fundamental Rights (Presented on April 29, 1947—date of Report April 23, 1947), *Constituent Assembly of India, Reports of Committees (First Series) 1947* (from December 1946 to July 1947) (New Delhi: The Manager, Government of India Press, 1947), 20.
7 The introduction of the universal franchise in India has been widely recognized as a major transformation. See, for example, Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006 edition), 46–49 (first published 1966); Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 222.
8 See Election Commission of India, *Report on the First General Elections in India 1951–52* (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1955); Ramachandra Guha, "Democracy's Biggest Gamble: India's First Free Elections in 1952." *World Policy Journal* 19, no. 1 (2002): 95–103.
9 Election Commission India, *Report on the First General Election in India*, 10.
10 The articles on citizenship came up for final discussions in the Constituent Assembly only in August 1949.
11 Letter No. CA/64/RR/47, March 15, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-I, Election Commission of India Record Room, New Delhi (hereafter ECIR).
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 The guiding principle was that a citizen ought to have some kind of a territorial connection with India. See B.R. Ambedkar's cover letter to the February 21, 1948, Draft Constitution. See The Drafting Committee, Constituent Assembly of India, *Draft Constitution of India* (New Delhi: The Manager Government of India Press, 1948), v.
15 Ibid., 4.
16 This was set in Explanation (ii) to Article 5 (b). Ibid.
17 See Zamindar, *The Long Partition*, Ch. 3.
18 Internal note, April 24, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-I, ECIR.
19 Internal note no. 82, April 27, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-I, ECIR.
20 Ibid.
21 Internal note, May 25, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
22 From May to November 1948, more than two dozen citizen and professional organizations repeatedly wrote to the CAS inquiring about the registration of the refugees and the means of acquiring citizenship.
23 Letter from the President of the East Bengal Minority Welfare Central Committee, Calcutta, to Rajendra Prasad [President of the Constituent Assembly], May 12, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
24 Ibid. Also see, for example, letter from the Secretary of the Surma Sammilani, Assam, to CAS, July 14, 1948, CA/12/FR/48, ECIR.
25 Letter from the President of the East Bengal Minority Welfare Central Committee, Calcutta, to Rajendra Prasad, May 12, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
26 Ibid.
27 Letter from the Reforms Commissioner of Assam to all District Officers, May 28, 1948 (circular No. L.801/47), CA/1/FR/48-II, ECIR.
28 Letter from the Reforms Commissioner of Assam to all District Officers, June 2, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR. It is noteworthy that in Assam there have been contestations over immigration, citizenship, and who was a "son of the soil" from the 1920s. This fight was largely driven by the quest to protect the Assamese-speaking

inhabitants, mainly of the Assam Valley, in the face the growing share of Bengali-speaking population in Assam, as well as in government jobs, due to the rising influx of immigrants, both Muslims and Hindus, from Bengal (later East Bengal). With the post-Partition influx of (Bengali-speaking) refugees from East Bengal and mainly Sylhet, immigrants and the question of their citizenship became an intensely contested issue. For good discussions of this history, see, for example, Amalendu Guha, *Planter-Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam 1826–1947* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1977), 164–320; Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflicts in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

29 Letter from the Chair of Cachar District Congress Committee to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Fundamental rights, June 18, 1948 CA/1/FR/48-II, ECIR. That letter was sent on behalf of ten organizations that were signatories to it.

30 Ibid.

31 Letter from the Secretary of the Surma Sammilani, Assam, to CAS, July 14, 1948, CA/12/FR/48.

32 See the editorial "Confusing and Anomalous," *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, June 7, 1948, CA/12/FR/48, ECIR.

33 Internal Report, June 1, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

34 Ibid.

35 Internal note, June 8, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

36 Serial note 3 (by B.N. Rau), June 15, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR. A similar argument was made by the President of the East Bengal Minority Welfare Central Committee Letter. See note 26.

37 Internal note (by the Joint Secretary, S.N. Mukerjee), July 13, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

38 Serial note 4, Draft Telegram, July 16, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-III, ECIR.

39 Press Note July 15, 1948. File No. CA/1/FR/48 1948-V, ECIR.

40 Telegram from the Joint Secretary to the Government of West Bengal to CAS, July 17, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-II; Internal note, July 23, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

41 Internal note (by B.N. Rau), July 24, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

42 Letter from CAS to all provincial governments, all chief commissioners of provinces, and all Indian states and unions, July 26, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

43 Memo No. 938-AR, from Joint Secretary to the Government of West Bengal (Home Department) Constitution and Election to the Sub-divisional Officer, Sadar (Hoogly), July 20, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-II, ECIR.

44 Letter from East Bengal Displaced Lawyers' Association to Rajendra Prasad, July 28, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

45 Ibid.

46 Letter from the Assam Refugees' Association Shillong to CAS, July 31, 1948, CA/29/Const/48, CA/12/FR/48, ECIR.

47 Letter from the Assam Citizens' Association Dhubri to CAS, August 29, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

48 Letter from the Assam Citizens' Association Mangaldai to CAS, August 30, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR. They copied their letter to the Reforms Commissioner of Assam, the Premier of Assam, Minister of Relief and Rehabilitation, and to the Constitutional Advisor.

49 "Resolution adopted in the public meeting held in Digboi Indian Club at 5.30 p.m. on Monday, the 26 July 1948," Appendix "A" in: letter from the Joint Secretary to the

Government of India, Ministry of Labour to CAS, November 16, 1948, CA/12/FR/48, ECIR.

50 Letter from the Assam Citizens' Association Mangaldai to CAS, August 30, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

51 For example, the Bengali Residents and Settlers Bilasipura sent on September 12, 1948, a (handwritten) resolution, which reiterated word for word the letter from the Assam Citizens' Association Dhubri to CAS, September 8, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR. The Assam Citizens' Association Goalpara sent a copy of their resolutions to the Assam Citizens' Associations of Dhubri and Gauhati. Letter from Assam Citizens' Association Goalpara to Rajendra Prasad, August 30, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

52 Letter from the East Bengal Minority Welfare Central Committee, Calcutta, to Rajendra Prasad, August 3, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR (emphases in the original).

53 Letter from the Servants of Bengal Society to B.N. Rau, August 12, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid. Underline in original.

56 Letter from the Committee for Acquiring Indian Citizenship Jamshedpur, Bihar, to CAS, September 25, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

57 Assam Information and Publicity Department Press Communiqué, "Enrolment of Refugees on Electoral Rolls," 12 August 1948. Also see *The Assam Gazette*, August 18, 1948, 595, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

58 Confidential letter No. LRE.530/48/7 from the Reforms Commissioner of Assam to all district officers (including superintendent, Lushai Hills), subdivisional officers, and political officers of Frontiers Tract, August 9, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-III, ECIR.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Letter from the Assam Citizens' Association Nowgong to CAS, August 26, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR. Also see a copy of a telegram from the Assam Citizens Association Gauhati to CAS, August 17, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

62 "Resolution No. 2," Assam Bengalee Association, in Internal discussions, CAS, August 28, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

63 "A Sinister Move," *Hindustan Standard*, Calcutta, August 14, 1948, CA/5/FR/48, ECIR.

64 For example: Letter from the Assam Citizens Association Gauhati to CAS, August 18, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR. Purdanashin (pardanashin) means: women who observed rigid rules of seclusion.

65 "Resolution No. 2," Assam Bengalee Association, in Internal discussions, CAS, August 28, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR. (Emphasis added.)

66 Letter from Tinsukia Bengali Association to the deputy commissioner, Lakhimpur District, Assam, September 4, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR. Similar complaints arrived from other organizations.

67 Letter of the Assam Citizens Association Nowgong to the District Magistrate Nowgong, Assam, September 30, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

68 Ibid. (emphasis in original.)

69 Summary of discussions between Mr. S.N. Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Constituent Assembly of India and Mr. M.A.T. Iyengar, Joint Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Home Department, September 14, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

70 See, for example, letter from the Assam Prantiya Hindustani Sammelan Shillong to CAS, September 27, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.

71 Letter from the Assam Citizens' Association Mangaldai to CAS, August 30, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
72 "Resolution No. 2," Assam Bengalee Association, in Internal discussions, CAS, August 28, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
73 See Internal discussion, August 13 to August 28, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
74 Express Letter from CAS to the Joint Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, July 24, 1948 CA/1/FR/48-II, ECIR.
75 West Bengal Government Home Department, Constitution and Elections, Memorandum No. 1513- A.R. "Draft Electoral Rolls," September 30, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-III, ECIR.
76 See copy of a letter from CAS to the Secretary, Citizens' Union Shillong, September 1, 1948, CA/12/FR/48, ECIR. The CAS also sent this letter to other organizations.
77 Indeed, government ministries also sought the CAS's opinion in the wake of confusions over the declarations for citizenship. For example, letter from the Home Ministry to B.N. Rau, September 2, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
78 Summary of discussions between Mr. S.N. Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Constituent Assembly of India, and Mr. R.R. Khaund, Reforms Commissioner, Assam, September 10, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
79 Telegram from CAS to Reforms Commissioner of Assam, September 20, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
80 Letter from M.M. Basu, Deputy Secretary to the Government of West Bengal Secretariat Home Department to Joint Secretary CAS, September 28, 1948, CA/1/FR/48-III. A seven-page note was attached to the letter.
81 Ibid. This was ahead of enumeration in the area of Calcutta.
82 See notes 66 and 67.
83 Letter from the Reforms Commissioner Assam to the CAS, November 4, 1948, and letter dated November 10, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
84 Press Note September 25, 1948, CA/1/FR/48 1948-V, ECIR.
85 See letters from CAS to the Assam Citizens' Associations Gauhati, Assam Citizens' Associations Mangaldai, Assam Citizens' Associations Nowgong, Assam Citizens' Associations Dhubri, Assam Citizens' Associations Goalpara and Assam Citizens' Associations Dibrugarh, October 1, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
86 Letter from CAS to the Government of Bihar Appointment Department Reforms and Election Branch, October 7, 1948, CA/9/FR/48, ECIR.
87 See note 3.
88 See Joya Chatterji, "Right or Charity? The Debate over Relief and Rehabilitation in West Bengal, 1947–50," in *The Partition of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*, ed. Suvir Kaul (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 82. Also see Roy, *Partitioned Lives*, 195.
89 "Motion Re Preparation of Electoral Rolls," *CAD*, Vol. VII, 1355–1387.

10

Toward Mass Education or an "Aristocracy of Talents": Nonalignment and the Making of a Strong India

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In a democratic society, the opportunity of learning must be open not only to an elite *but to all those who have to carry the privilege and responsibility of citizenship. Education is a universal right, not a class privilege … If we are to make the understanding and vision of our farsighted and sensitive leaders who framed the Constitution the common possession of all our people, our universities must educate on the right lines and provide facilities for educating a larger number of people.*

—Report of the University Education Commission, 1949[1]

I would repeat Mr. Jefferson's advice that every democratic community should provide for the proper training of its "natural aristocracy of talents and virtue," and this is to be attempted through our universities. That would, of course, be an admission that the higher centres of learning and research are meant exclusively for the "aristocracy of talents and virtue" and government should firmly oppose any mass demand for University education as a "fundamental right" of citizenship. I do not believe that even in the most democratic society a "square peg" has a right to demand a "round hole" as one of the fundamental rights of citizens. We are now wasting a lot of the tax payers money on trying to give a university education to those who are manifestly unfit for such educational treatment.

I. N. Menon, Planning Commission, August 1960[2]

Between 1947, the year of independence, and the comprehensive Kothari Commission Report on the state of education in India published in 1966, the consensus among policymakers shifted from mass education to restricting access to higher education through selective admissions. Alarmed by proof of lowered

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standards and student indiscipline that were, in turn, linked to a manifold increase in numbers of students entering universities with limited resources, an array of educationists and policymakers concluded that a poor nation like India did not have the resources, after all, to allow access to higher education to all. In doing so, they chose to view education as a state project rather than the social project it had become during the heyday of anticolonial nationalism.[3]

The moment of independence that coincided with the division of India was suffused with heightened expectations as well as deep grief at the carnage of Partition. Millions were uprooted; hundreds of educational institutions lay abandoned. The work of reconstruction had to commence across multiple fronts. This essay focuses on the writings and actions of a few major educationists—Meghnad Saha, C. D. Deshmukh, D. S. Kothari, K. G. Saiyidain—who sought new ways of financing their ambitions for higher education in an uncertain financial climate. Buffeted by the polarizing winds of the Cold War, and feted, in turn, by the Soviet Union and the United States, they took copious notes of educational developments in both countries, and accordingly framed their plans. Far from being "developmental subjects, mobilized, sterilized, and enlightened by foreign experts," as described by Nick Cullather in his masterly study of food aid workers and planners during these years, these educationists and policymakers carefully weighed the pros and cons of acquiring resources from either power; they also formulated their own critique of the educational policies followed by both powers.[4] For these educationists, nonalignment was a strategic opportunity to engage with both power blocs to further the "national interest" of India, here defined as the development of trained manpower, with the aim of eliminating "backwardness" and poverty, and gaining India a dominant place in the world.

Each educationist understood the imperative to strengthen India differently. For the scientist and parliamentarian Meghnad Saha, this meant ensuring that the still-to-be constituted University Grants Commission (UGC) of India would have financial powers and autonomy; it also meant achieving "atomic autonomy" for India. The former finance minister and first chairman of the UGC, C. D. Deshmukh, wanted to strengthen existing universities and also build new institutions, with foreign assistance, if required. D. C. Kothari, a physicist who also went on to chair the UGC, and who shaped the state-of-the-field Kothari Commission Report, focused on science research and teaching, while educationist and administrator K. G. Saiyidain warned against the humanities being sidelined in the postwar emphasis on science and technology. In their myriad efforts, each individual referred to developments abroad, especially in the United States and USSR, to support his stance, thereby underscoring the appeal of transnational ideas on educational policy in this period. However, such references were hardly mechanical: the debates over what kind of education would be appropriate for India were thoughtful, even if in retrospect they were limited by the social origins of their authors, the lack of an overarching comprehensive plan to revamp education, and, always, finances.[5]

Hovering over their deliberations was Jawaharlal Nehru, chairman of the scientific manpower committee appointed in 1947, as well as minister of external affairs in all the years he was prime minister. Nehru strongly supported an emphasis on science and engineering education, believing it to be the miracle cure for India's

"backwardness"; at the same time, he understood the need to create cultural capital in other nonaligned countries of Africa and Asia and especially pushed for a program of overseas cultural scholarships that would enable students from these countries to study in India. He also worked for a change in the curriculum in Indian universities that would better reflect India's own changing relationships in international relations.[6]

The critical early years, 1946–1956

In *Citizenship and Its Discontents*, political scientist Niraja Jayal analyzes the debates in the Constituent Assembly of India (1946–49) that resulted in a most "precarious political compromise," with social and economic rights including that of education being listed under the nonjusticiable Directive Principles of State Policy. These principles were to become, in her pithy words, "an expanding reliquary of good intentions."[7] Although Article 45 of the newly drafted constitution directed the state to provide free and compulsory education for all children between six and fourteen years of age within a period of ten years, there was little effort expended on the practical dimensions of this "good intention." Meanwhile, quick results were expected of Nehru's government; a natural consequence of the high hopes and "sense of epochal change" that accompanied independence.[8]

Moving a motion to cut a token hundred rupees from "Education" in the new budget in 1952, the scientist and newly elected independent Member of Parliament, Meghnad Saha (1893–1956), deplored the fact that none of the recent Radhakrishnan-led University Education Commission's recommendations had been implemented. As a member of this commission, Saha could explain why education was retained a "state subject" under the constitution, while university education had been placed on the "concurrent list." Saha's audience of fellow parliamentarians understood all too well his allusion to universities "being made tools of provincial or state politics." The Commission had wanted education to be "free from all taints of provincialism, that our universities should train a number of highclass workers … in the interests of the country as a whole."[9] Saha was critical of the meager thirty-four lakhs that had been provided for higher education in the budget estimates for 1952–53; this was less than one-fifteenth of what had been recommended by the Radhakrishnan Commission, and in striking contrast to the funds that the UK had poured into its autonomous University Grants Committee and war-ravaged Russia had invested in its universities. Furthermore, the agency that was to disburse these funds to universities, the UGC that had also been a key recommendation of the Radhakrishnan Commission, was yet to be established. All indications pointed to the government trying to revive an older moribund committee, and not make it the autonomous body that it was in Britain. Saha sharply rebuked the government for "trying to blow life into the carcass of a horse to draw the chariot of your educational progress." He was also critical of the newly established national laboratories and likened them to building a "temple, but you have not made any provision that there should be a constant influx of votaries into the temple." He also compared his students to those at American, British, and Russian universities:

> Our young men yield to none, they yield to young men of no other countries in their enthusiasm for work, in their thirst for knowledge, in their thirst for education. We have got very good seeds. But what field have we prepared for them? It is an arid country … I would appeal to you that this policy of indifference, this policy of denial, would not do. You must gird up our loins and find out money so that we can render sufficient assistance to the universities and revitalize their activities.[10]

In his writings as Palit professor of Physics at Calcutta University, and later as founder of the Institute of Nuclear Physics in Calcutta—the first to offer a graduate program in nuclear physics—Saha worked with single-minded devotion to placing India on the map of atomic science. He was intrepid in sourcing out funds; as early as 1936, he had secured a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to travel through major physics departments in Europe and the United States.[11] He subsequently began work on building the first cyclotron for nuclear physics research and education in the University Science College at Calcutta.

With the end of the Second World War, however, the mood among scientists and policymakers had begun to change; historian of science Jahnavi Phalkey writes, "nuclear physics now became uniquely important to nation-building."[12] During this time of hypernationalism, "it seemed no less plausible to argue that to not possess nuclear knowledge would enfeeble India in international politics. Might the inability to master nuclear science and technology mean the loss of sovereignty yet again?" Phalkey bolsters her argument with a quote from Nehru's *Autobiography*: "An industrially backward country will continually upset the world's equilibrium and encourage the aggressive tendencies of more developed countries."[13]

The small window of opportunity, of collaboration with American scientists that Saha had sought to capitalize on, suddenly seemed about to close. By November 1947, the US Congress' McMahon Act sought to control the export of "specific cases of declassified equipment such as radiation-detection equipment, mass spectrometers … and particle accelerators."[14] Worried about the loss of access, Saha continued to search for other sources. Curiously, he was sidelined by the nuclear establishment in India. In a letter to Nehru, he railed against the policy of secrecy that was being followed by India's Atomic Energy Commission.

Saha traced how the UK and France had broken through the monopoly on atomic knowledge that the United States had sought to cultivate, and noted that this was made possible by the concerted action of "all the available scientists of the country—physicists, chemists, geologists, technologists and engineers …. Evidently, if such cooperation is to be achieved, Iron-curtain 'secrecy' within the nation as is being practised in India, defeats the very objective of the enterprise."[15]

That the United States no longer had a monopoly on atomic science was laid bare in president Dwight Eisenhower's recent address to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, wherein he had pointedly offered to set up an International Atomic Energy agency that would offer "fissionable material" to "serve the peaceful pursuits of mankind," including "electrical energy" to the "power-starved areas of the world."[16] In the wake of Eisenhower's offer, about which Saha wrote to Nehru,

to Vijayalakshmi Pandit, then president of the UN General Assembly, and K.D. Malaviya, deputy minister of natural resources and scientific research, Saha also met with representatives of the US congressional committee in atomic energy in Washington DC in August 1954. He felt strongly that they would be willing to admit India into the special committee created by the UN if India would offer "certain amount of raw materials like Beryllium and Thorium."[17]

Yet, only a few months later, a visit to the Soviet Union to attend its Atomic Energy Conference left Saha very impressed with the progress they had made, and the sense that Soviet production had "not only overtaken" American production in nuclear power, "but in some cases exceeded it."[18] Saha referred to the Soviets' new policy of peaceful utilization of atomic energy, and that they too were offering "friendly countries atomic reactors, and personnel to run them. … Thus the atomic imperialism started by the USA is being countered by the Soviets, in their own way." Saha now felt that the Soviets could "render us the same help as the USA, and probably with better grace and less haggling, for these negotiations will be carried on between one state and another, while in the case of USA or UK … the negotiations will probably be between India and some private company, as in the case of steel negotiations." Saha strongly suggested that India negotiate with both the United States and the Soviet Union, and accept the better offer. But he was consistent in his conclusion that the ultimate goal remained atomic autonomy: "we must have our own atomic scientists and technicians … our efforts must be backed by larger organization."[19]

Saha's forays into atomic cooperation from the 1930s to the 1950s were mirrored in efforts by policymakers in the West to try and steer newly independent countries like India away from the attractions of communism. From management guru Peter Drucker to soon-to-be US president John F. Kennedy, everyone wanted to tap into, and steer the course of, the "educational revolution" believed to be under way across the world. Drucker's argument that education was the "capital resource" of a modern, industrial society and that rising "educational inequality" would push "poor, underdeveloped countries into the totalitarian camp" resonated widely. For Drucker:

> With the launching of Russia's Sputnik … the old peasantry became a grim fact. … In an age of superpowers and absolute weapons, higher education may indeed be the only area in which a country can still … gain decisive advantage. The greatest impact of the educational revolution is therefore on international power and politics. It has made the supply of highly educated people a decisive factor in the competition between powers—for leadership and perhaps even for survival. *The conclusion from this is as simple as it is new: Educational development becomes a priority for national policy*.[20]

If the lesson here was obvious to foreign policymakers, it was certainly lost to India's early planners, who routinely shortchanged education when making budgetary allocations.

The gap in funds was also sought to be filled by other means: The Ford Foundation would grow to become one of the most influential players in the Indian higher

education sector.[21] Aware of Nehru's decision to accept "external assistance" only if it carried with it "no conditions, explicit or implicit, which might affect even remotely the country's ability to take an independent line in international affairs,"[22] Ford's director, Paul Hoffman, was supported by a sensitive US ambassador in India, Chester Bowles, who affirmed: "We will need money but equally important we will need imagination, tact, persuasiveness and respect for the Indian people themselves." Bowles did not think it at all wise to demand India's unequivocal support of US foreign policy in exchange for this aid.[23]

Hoffman's successor in India, Douglas Ensminger, thought of education as one possible sector to which the Foundation could contribute in India. In 1952, Ensminger initiated a "Books for India" program that would meet the need for more and better literature—not, he averred, directed against the "Russian publications program in India."[24] In October 1955, Ensminger's efforts bore fruit with the inauguration of the Southern Languages Book Trust, one of Ford's flagship programs in the field of education.[25] Back in Delhi, however, Nehru and officials in the education ministry chafed at some of the added work that more aid and interaction entailed. While his relations with individual Americans like Douglas Ensminger were pitch-perfect, Nehru did not appreciate officials from the United States and USSR visiting Indian universities and going into their "relative merits." He added, in a 1953 directive that remained in circulation through the 1950s: "I would rather return the money … than have this imposition and this interference."[26] But the aid mattered, and in the field of higher education, led to the establishment of some pioneer institutions of excellence.

Quality versus quantity, 1956–1967

It was during the tenure of C. D. Deshmukh (1896–1982), who left a career in the elite Indian Civil Service and then politics to rejoin the bureaucracy and become the first chairman of the newly established UGC in 1956, that the explosion in higher education enrollment began to be seen as a serious problem to resolve.[27] As UGC chair, Deshmukh sought to streamline procedures and ensure that all new universities would require prior approval from the UGC to avail of central funds. Deeply concerned by the problem of deteriorating standards, he blamed populist pressures. More controversially, he sought to manage the increasing numbers of students entering universities by challenging the existing system of admissions. In an address to the fifth annual general meeting of the Institute of Telecommunications Engineers in 1958, Deshmukh found

> more alarming in its potentiality for harm to quality is the new danger of admission of students of obviously *inferior caliber* to engineering colleges in some of the states under political pressure, personal undue influence or an exaggerated desire to give everyone a chance. …The profession of medicine is already being ruined by such inferior admissions … In engineering, lowering of quality will spell utter disaster in peace and security.[28]

The words "inferior caliber" and the allegation of politicians' pressure on university admissions by no less than the chairman of the UGC resonated far and wide. The then minister of education K. L. Shrimali, and minister of scientific research and cultural affairs, Humayun Kabir, had to respond to heated questions in both houses of parliament on the accuracy of these allegations; they replied that these were being looked into. In newspapers across India, but especially in the south, letters angrily described the discrimination that was being meted out to brahmins, especially in Mysore, where reservations for the backward classes, the scheduled castes, and the scheduled tribes were mandated by law.[29]

Undeterred by the cabinet ministers' attempts to soothe tempers, Deshmukh elaborated on his views to Shrimali, the education minister. He blamed some state governments "who seem to hold the view that pressure on the apparatus of teaching or on teachers and consequent deterioration of standards are matters of no importance so long as *some fancied privilege* of young people is secured, namely, that *any citizen who wishes to receive higher education is entitled to receive it in some institution*."[30] Apart from such political pressure, there was the added consideration that a country as poor as India could not afford to waste "national resources" on educating "anyone who has not such suitability." Deshmukh also referred to ongoing debates among educationists on this very issue: the most recent meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education had accepted the principle that "university education is only for those who are adjudged to be fit for it and who are adjudged to likely to benefit from it."[31] Insistent on merit being the sole criterion for admission, Deshmukh was also critical of those who paid donations to get admitted into professional colleges.[32]

Although the deeply divisive question of reservations for those Deshmukh deemed "inferior" was not fleshed out in this period, it alludes to the shifting priorities of the postcolonial Indian state. From trumpeting equality of opportunity to all in the press and parliament, and reserving seats for the socially and historically disadvantaged in the constitution, the debates among some educationists behind closed doors reveal a growing concern with securing efficiency and building expertise by depriving those deemed "inferior" from access to higher education. Here, the shift from social concerns in the pre-Independence period to new goals of making India strong, seemingly untrammeled by the weight of the past, becomes apparent.[33]

As vice chancellor of the University of Delhi (1961–66), Deshmukh continued to face unprecedented numbers of students entering colleges that were simply not equipped to deal with so many students. In his autobiography, he recalls a possible remedy—the founding of another university, informally named Raisina University, under whose jurisdiction would fall all the colleges south of Ajmeri Gate. However, by the time the bill to create this university was introduced in parliament, Nehru had died, and the question of how best to commemorate his legacy came to center around the creation of a new university in Delhi. Thus, the hoped-for amelioration of undergraduate numbers in Delhi University was forgotten in the excitement of starting a new graduate university in south Delhi, what would come to be known as the Jawaharlal Nehru University.[34]

Attending the Commonwealth Universities Congress in London in 1963, Deshmukh realized that this "eternal controversy" of quality versus quantity was

not restricted to India.[35] In the UK, the United States, and Australia, educationists were grappling with the problem of maintaining the quality of their universities, but also increasing enrollments. For Deshmukh, the solution lay in developing a parallel system of higher education that would help India locate and develop talents, as well as provide some opportunity to the less talented. He considered extending the system of evening classes and adult education, and recommended the introduction of correspondence courses for those not "extraordinarily talented"—a set of measures that would find their way to other contemporary government reports.[36]

In his autobiography, Deshmukh describes the "coping-stone" of his tenure at Delhi University to be a Ford grant of $10 million.[37] This money was meant to raise the standards of this particular university, a project that sounds strikingly similar in function to the Special Program in Education that Ford had embarked upon to strengthen specific universities in the United States in 1960.[38] This emphasis on locating and funding specific "centers of excellence" would become the modus operandi for the UGC in the following decades, an indication that they were losing the battle of regulating and maintaining standards across all universities—their original raison d'être.

The problem of quality also worried Deshmukh's successor at the UGC, Daulat Singh Kothari (1906–93). A physicist who trained with Meghnad Saha in the 1920s, Kothari's first appointment with the newly independent government of India was as scientific advisor to the ministry of defense from 1948 to 1961. Here, Kothari made profuse notes of the resources that were being poured into science and technology in the Soviet Union, UK, and the United States. He brought this knowledge to the UGC, which he chaired from 1961 to 1972. Building on a report submitted by Professor W. W. Buechner of MIT, Kothari organized summer science institutes with the support of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Science Foundation.[39] From a mere four institutes in 1963, the number of institutes quickly grew to a respectable eighty only three years later.[40]

Kothari was also concerned with the separation of teaching and research that had contributed to the lowering of standards in universities. Aware of reforms in higher education in countries like West Germany, where the new model emphasized retaining and strengthening connections between research institutes and universities, he tried to reverse the direction in which Indian universities and national laboratories had grown.[41] In the 1966 Kothari Commission Report (this first comprehensive study of education in independent India bore his name as chair of the commission), Kothari wrote that the separation of fundamental research from teaching would be "most unfortunate and short-sighted, almost suicidal."[42] One of the main questions underlying the report was how to make India succeed in a changing and competitive educational environment. In a chapter titled "Education and National Objectives," the authors framed the problem thus:

> It is true that knowledge is international and that there can be no barriers, except those of our own creation, to its free import. But India cannot forever remain at the receiving end of the pipeline. She must make her own contribution as an intellectual and cultural equal to the eternal human endeavor to extend the

> frontiers of knowledge. This demands a large-scale program for the discovery and development of talent and the creation of a few centres of excellence in higher education which can compare favourably with the best of their kind in the world.[43]

As recently as 1958, the government of India had passed a Scientific Policy Resolution aiming for an increase in the output of science graduates from 30 to 40 percent in the Third Five Year Plan because they now recognized that countries such as the USSR and Japan had "radically transformed" their economies "only on the basis of purposeful science education and research."[44] It was this challenge, and an awareness of the enormous costs that high-level science research entailed, that might have convinced Kothari to turn to the Ford Foundation model of financing specific centers of excellence/advanced study in universities across India.

In fact, such a model had been part of discussions among educationists at least since the early 1950s. In his convocation address to the students of Barahseni College in Aligarh in 1951, Justice P. N. Sapru of the Allahabad High Court suggested establishing new, or reserving a few of the existing universities "for special treatment and making them as efficient as the best universities in any western countries."[45] The suggestion did not go down well with his correspondent, the historian and former secretary of education Tara Chand, who replied: "I do not quite see how it can be done because it is likely to create grievances and a feeling of unfairness in treatment and in these days of democracy Governments may not be able to resist the pressure for equalization of finance."[46]

By 1960, members of the Planning Commission's education division were quite openly discussing proposals to limit the admission of students to professional and general colleges and thereby deal with the continuing conundrum of quality versus quantity. One of the members, I. N. Menon, referred positively to the Jeffersonian ideal of a university for the proper training of its "natural aristocracy of talents and virtue" and proceeded to quote exhaustively from former president of Harvard University, James Bryant Conant's Memorial lecture in 1952. Menon was drawn to the president's declaration that "we do not expand our four year colleges," and that "we attempt to make fashionable a two year college course … we create a climate of opinion in which the length of the education beyond eighteen is not considered the hallmark of its respectability."[47] Deshmukh's idea of creating two parallel streams of higher education, one for the "gifted" and the other for the "bulk of our average youth" was beginning to gain momentum.[48] But the notion that respectability could be tied to *limiting* education was a novel one for India where upward social mobility and respectability were deeply entwined with collecting educational certificates and credentials.[49]

The magnitude of the problem of enrollments was clear in the 1962 UNESCO sponsored study *Access to Higher Education*. Here, educationist and lead author Khwaja Ghulam Saiyidain (1904–71) elaborated upon the quantity side of the problem, that of wastage and unregulated expansion. He began, however, by detailing the dismal colonial inheritance India had to overcome: the census report of 1951 showed the percentage of literacy was 16.6; 24.9 percent for men and 7.9 percent for women. Only a decade later,

the push for higher education had resulted in the following awesome statistics: The enrollment in colleges for general education had increased by 145.75 percent between 1949–50 and 1958–59; the enrollment in professional colleges increased by 154.9 percent. The report noted that the rate of increase was highest at the university level and progressively lower at the secondary and elementary stages with percent increases over nine years being 147.67, 136.19 and 72.14, respectively.[50] Saiyidain explained some of this expansion by referring to the hopes ushered in by independence: however, he suggested these hopes had missed the mark, and needed to be redirected. A policy of "drift" needed to be met "with courage."[51] This was necessitated by the awful statistics on performance. Saiyidain noted that on average only 41 percent passed the first year of the BA examination, and of these, the third divisioners account for about 57 percent.[52] He also revealed that the pass percentage improved in honours courses and professional colleges, both of which followed a policy of selective admissions. Saiyidain weighed in on the side of those who preferred to limit admissions, and proposed the establishment of "model institutions" with "superior staff and better equipment and amenities."[53]

To be fair, Saiyidain did refer to the considerable opposition to what some considered was an elitist measure. At a seminar organized at Madras, under the joint auspices of the Inter-University Board of India and the International Association of Universities, some participants

> strongly held the view that it would be a retrograde step to confine university education to the "intellectual elite," that a good deal of useful work in every country was carried on by *second-rate or third-rate people for whom college education would be useful*. It was further contended that no one could predict beforehand what a person with a third-class academic career may make of his life in the course of the years.[54]

As UGC chairman, Kothari, too, faced resistance among other members of the Commission. To a member, K. L. Joshi's, persistent criticism that it was not fair to discriminate between universities, Kothari had replied: A university grades students in classes—it must do so. It is natural to grade universities as well … I pointed out that to raise quality it was most important to concentrate our meager resources … we had to distinguish between the deserving and the indifferent, and such discrimination could not be entirely mechanical in nature.[55]

In the Kothari Commission Report that was published four years later, these and other objections were more easily swept aside. Now the authors addressed the socioeconomic and political considerations that preferred a policy of general (as opposed to selective) admissions, and came out in favor of a "suitable system of reservation of seats" for the backward classes, rural areas, and underprivileged groups entering higher education for the first time, as a transitional measure.[56] Meanwhile, the scheme of Centers of Advanced Study that had been recently provided for by the USSR under UNESCO auspices was praised, although it was recognized that not all centers were working to their optimal capacity.[57]

It should be noted that other members of the Kothari Commission including Lord Robbins, who had chaired the recent Committee on Higher Education

(1961–63) in the UK. and P. M. S. Blackett, president of the Royal Society and former defense adviser to the government of India, had each, in their own way, favored a two-tier system of higher education. Attuned to developments in higher education in other countries, the Robbins Committee Report emphasized the need to drastically increase the number of science and technology graduates in British universities, and so recommended the development of five special institutes for scientific and technological education and research.[58] Blackett also spelt out what he considered were the responsibilities of Britain toward her former colonies in the field of higher education in an address at Leeds which was duly circulated among UGC members.[59]

As with the management expert Drucker, Blackett underscored that the "Number One Problem" was "the development of the now under-developed two-thirds of the world's population." For Blackett, the problem of educational inequality required different solutions in newly colonized African countries, and in the relatively more advanced economies of India and Pakistan. Newly minted graduates from British Universities could be sent to teach in African universities that were severely short-staffed, but Indian and Pakistani universities were deemed to suffer from a shortage of "certain specific types of experts in certain basic sciences and technologies, and in managerial skills." Blackett praised the new Centres of Advanced Study that were being established by India's UGC and thought this was a field where British scientists could help. He reported that the "Indian UGC" desired "visits of three or four months, or even shorter, of first-class British scientists with the specific object of helping a particular centre to build up the research and postgraduate teaching in their own special research field." Thus, at least some members of the Kothari Commission were ideologically predisposed to favor suggestions that echoed their own country's experiments in the field of higher education. Yet, it would be simplistic to suggest that India's policymakers were only interested in following a model that had worked elsewhere. The sheer range of independent India's relationships in the field of education also militates against such simplification.

The soft power of Indian higher education

Scarcely seen files from the ministry of education that now lie in the National Archives of India provide vignettes to the varied kinds of educational relationships that newly independent India sought to create and foster. With Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey, for instance, this included the exchange of archeological missions, fellowships for students, and the appointment of chairs in Turkish and Persian studies.[60] If these early efforts took some years to bear fruit, at least some of the fault must lie with the finance department that routinely slashed at the budget and ideas of the education ministry.[61]

Nehru's frequent appearance in some of these files reveals a deep interest in all subjects African—especially soon after the Bandung Conference. In long minutes, Nehru expressed his desire that India develop an abiding interest in Africa, introduce African subjects in university curricula, and that Delhi University begin a department

of African Studies which would, he hoped, be a model for other universities. The files include Nehru's correspondence with, and notes of, several meetings with Peter Wright, the new head of the new Department of African Studies at the University of Delhi. Wright's complaint that a "great barrier of distrust" separated African and Indian students led to Nehru proposing several schemes to better integrate African and Indian students.[62] Nehru strongly urged that some "African subjects" be included in the undergraduate curriculum so that students have a "more balanced approach to world understanding."[63] He was keen that Indian universities employ African teachers and to that end, he was involved in attempts to get Dr J. C. deGraft Johnson, an economist from the University of Gold Coast, to teach in India for a three-year term. But here, too, as in several other instances, the universities (of Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, and Lucknow) asserted their autonomy and resisted the will of the center. Thus, the prime minister's special interest in African students and subjects was not enough: in the words of a tired official in the education ministry, "from our approximately three year pursuit with only four universities in the country, we find that the proposal has not received the encouragement which it was expected to receive in these Universities."[64] The nonaligned movement had powerful advocates at the center; however, this did not resonate equally powerfully in the corridors of the academy.

Even so, the overseas cultural scholarships scheme that was initiated by the Ministry of Education grew in strength and popularity. From seventy scholarships to students from Africa and Asia in 1949, the number increased to a hundred by 1952.[65] The new education secretary, Humayun Kabir, noted that the scheme would be expanded to include Transjordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Gold Coast, Israel, Libya, and Madagascar. In a separate note, B. N. Nanda of the Ministry of External Affairs emphasized the importance of these scholarships in promoting friendship in the Middle East, especially on account of the "anti-Indian propaganda" that was being carried on by Pakistan in these countries.[66] The founding of institutions like the Indian Council of Cultural Relations in 1950 also led to the strengthening of cultural and educational ties, especially in the Indian Ocean region. By 1960, Professor R. O. Olson of Ohio State University, commissioned to write a paper on Indo-American educational ties by the Ford Foundation, had to also include a section on India's own scholarship schemes that brought students from Africa and Asia to Indian universities.[67]

Indeed, Indian educationists recognized the soft power that educational exchanges made possible. K. G. Saiyidain, India's education secretary and delegate to the Commonwealth Education Conference in Scotland in 1959, was appointed chairman of the committee to decide on the question of supply and exchange of teachers in the Commonwealth. He relied on India's experience in this field to teach his fellow delegates the mantra: "we must learn to give with humility and receive with dignity." Agreeing with the decision of the Conference to "widen the catchment area" and recruit teachers from across the Commonwealth, Saiyidain thought it desirable from the "broader political and cultural point of view" to send Indian teachers to Africa as well as South East Asian countries.[68] Yet, Saiyidain's profound mantra, which caught on at the conference, must not lead to the past assumption that India had resolved the delicate balance between giving and receiving aid in

her overseas relationships. Numerous letters and petitions in these files also attest to the tardiness and stinginess with which Indian bureaucrats routinely disbursed scholarships.[69]

The paucity of funds, especially of valuable foreign exchange, is a constant feature in discussions involving exchange programs or overseas scholarships. In 1949, the then education secretary had insisted that overseas scholarship schemes for the academic staff of universities were time-bound and limited; these were strictly geared to sending teachers abroad to gain useful knowledge that would help raise the standard of instruction and research within India.[70] It was assumed that once the knowledge gap was bridged, there would be no further need for anyone—students or teachers—to study abroad. By the time of the Kothari Commission and the new model of funding centers of advanced study, it was believed that study abroad could be limited to Indian scientists and scholars for "purposes of further training, research or for consultation with their foreign colleagues," and not for a "first-rate post-graduate education" which would soon be available within India.[71]

By the late 1950s, Indian educationists had the experience and confidence to criticize aspects of US and Soviet education. Delivering the prestigious Sachs lecture at Teachers College Columbia University in 1959, Saiyidain was scathingly critical of the growing tendency in America to "over-simplify" issues and not seek the deeper cause of what ailed American education. He referred to the "Sputnik scare" which had swept across America:

> "Russia has fired the Sputnik. What about American Education?" The implication was that it has failed in its purpose! … If no Sputnik had been fired or if America had had the first go in this race, I am convinced that the *deeper* problems of American education and American life would have remained just the same, and neither complacency then nor hysteria now would be in order.[72]

Saiyidain went on to speak in favor of a holistic education, of the importance of "good artists, sensitive social scientists, creative writers, dedicated teachers, and devoted craftsmen" all contributing toward the "good life." He deplored the excessive importance given to "highly trained engineers and technologists" and referred to the critical statement that had recently been issued by a group of American educationists who had visited the Soviet Union:

> "The short-term efficiency of Soviet Education may prove to be a long-term handicap in the communist struggle for world domination … They were sacrificing broad intellectual *development* in favor of efficient training and the country was severely limiting growth by stifling individual creativity." One would venture to express the hope that American education, too, will take this excellent advice to heart![73]

For Saiyidain in 1959, and for S. Radhakrishnan, a decade earlier, it was crucial to integrate the humanities into a broader liberal education. Only this could save India and the rest of the world from mutual destruction in an atomic age.

Conclusion

In the years to come, the focus on a few select centers of excellence further skewed the scales toward inequality, just as the dissenting and minority opinions of policymakers had warned.[74] Yet, the decision to fund specific centers of advanced study was itself the product of a compromise, "a democratic and distributive alternative to a bolder idea" to invest even more narrowly in a few universities that would be comparable to the best in the world.[75] That these educationists did not eventually succeed in vitalizing the field of higher education may be partly attributed to the condition of postcoloniality: budgetary constraints, and the magnitude of the educational deficit that was their colonial inheritance. Despite the successes of nonalignment in helping establish excellent institutes of higher learning, all the creative adaptation of ideas and resources could not fill the yawning gap between immediate needs and longer-term aspirations. Serious mistakes were made in the critical early years. Primary education for all was relegated to the nonjusticiable Directive Principles of State Policy of the constitution, and the UGC was not made immune to political interference. In retrospect, so many of the certitudes of the planners in this period such as the idea that enrollments in higher education might be channeled into a parallel stream of education, or that the need for Indians to study abroad for advanced degrees would diminish over time, have turned out to be egregiously wrong. A recent essay refers to "Nehruvian naivetés" in its examination of the caste question in higher education in this period.[76] This essay offers a further examination of this particularly elusive, and interesting, postcolonial moment.

Notes

1 S. Radhakrishnan et al., *Report of the University Education Commission*, 1949, 50, 67.
2 Meeting of Education Panel August 1960, Education Division, Planning Commission, Tara Chand Papers, Box 4, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (hereafter NMML).
3 For a brief outline of how anticolonial nationalists like Gandhi, Gokhale, Malaviya, Lajpat Rai envisaged national education, see J.P. Naik, "National Education in India (1906–65)," in *Educational Planning in India*, ed. J.P. Naik (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1965), 65–72.
4 Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 8; for a contrasting view, see Nicole Sackley, "Passage to Modernity: American Social Scientists, India, and the Pursuit of Development, 1945–1961," PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2004, 292.
5 This point has been forcefully made by J.P. Naik, member secretary of the Kothari Commission in Naik, *Educational Planning*, 1965.
6 On Nehru's postwar internationalism, see Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

7 Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 16, 147–154.
8 Introduction, this volume.
9 Debate in Parliament, June 13, 1952, File # 9, Speeches by Saha, M.N. Saha Papers, NMML. Also see the discussion of "parochialization" of university education in Susanne Rudolph and Lloyd Rudolph, *Education and Politics in India: Studies in Organization, Society, and Polity* (Harvard: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 6.
10 Ibid. See also File 29-66/52—G3, Ministry of Education, National Archives of India (hereafter NAI).
11 Jahnavi Phalkey, *Atomic State: Big Science in Twentieth-Century India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2013), 176.
12 Ibid., 31.
13 Ibid. The emphasis is Phalkey's.
14 Ibid., 191.
15 Saha to Nehru, November 11, 1953; attached Note on The Atomic Energy Commission of India, 6. Correspondence, Saha Papers, NMML. Emphasis in the original.
16 Saha to Vijayalakshmi Pandit, 4 June 1954, Correspondence, Saha Papers, NMML. Eisenhower's address to the UN General Assembly, December 8, 1953 is at http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/all_about_ike/speeches/atoms_for_peace.pdf (accessed May 28, 2017).
17 Saha to K.D. Malaviya, December 8, 1954, Correspondence, Saha Papers, NMML.
18 Saha to Nehru, July 18, 1955, Correspondence, Saha Papers NMML.
19 Ibid. Also, see Phalkey, *Atomic State*.
20 These lines are from an essay by Peter Drucker titled "The Educational Revolution," a laboriously typed copy of which I found in the papers of C.D. Deshmukh in Subject file # 58 A, "Expert working group on integrating education in economic and social development, 1964–70." The essay appeared as a chapter in Peter F. Drucker, *The Landmarks of Tomorrow* (Harper and Bros, 1959), 114–25. Emphasis in the original. On JFKs growing interest in India, see Sackley, "Passage to Modernity"; Cullather, *The Hungry World*.
21 For debates on the autonomy of foundations including Ford at the height of the Cold War, see Steven Heydemann and Rebecca Kinsey, "The State and International Philanthropy: The Contribution of American Foundations, 1919–1991," in *American Foundations: Roles and Contributions*, eds. David C. Hammack and Helmut K. Anheier (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2010), 222–23.
22 First chapter of the first five-year plan, quoted in Sanjaya Baru, "The Economic Imperative for India's Multilateralism," in *Shaping the Emerging World: India and the Multilateral Order*, eds. Waheguru Pal Singh, Pratap Bhanu Mehta and Bruce Jones (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 76.
23 However, not all officials agreed with Bowles. In an internal policy paper written for the Ford Foundation, A. Appadorai addressed their misgivings. See his paper on "The Problem of Indian-American Relations," 1951, Ford Foundation Report, Ford Foundation Archives (hereafter FFA).
24 Douglas Ensminger, Ford Foundation Program Letter for India and Pakistan, report no. 13, September 11, 1952, FFA. For a different view on this program and its strong links to waging the Cold War on a "cultural front," see Kathleen D. McCarthy, "From Cold War to Cultural Development: The International Cultural Activities of the Ford Foundation, 1950–1980," *Daedalus* 116, no. 1 (1987): 96–100.

25 Ford Foundation Program Letter India: report no. 67, October 1955, FFA.
26 Nehru, May 6, 1953 in file 9-50/55-A.I (U5), Ministry of Education, NAI.
27 For details of his interesting and wide-ranging career, see C.D. Deshmukh, *The Course of My Life* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1974).
28 "Note on various aspects of development" in Speeches and writings, file 44 (3) by Mr. C.D. Deshmukh, C.D. Deshmukh Papers, NMML. Emphasis mine.
29 For a sampling of these letters, see Subject file # 80, "Favouritism regarding admission to technical institution, January to March 1959," Deshmukh Papers, NMML. On the early relationship between caste-based reservations and the state, see Satish Deshpande, "Caste and Castelessness: Towards a Biography of the General Category," *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 15 (April 13, 2013): 32–39.
30 "The Problem of Restrictions on Admissions to Colleges and Universities," March 15, 1959, Subject file # 17, Deshmukh Papers, NMML. Emphasis mine.
31 Ibid.
32 For a critique of the category of "merit," see Deshpande, "Caste and Castelessness"; Ajantha Subramanian, "Making Merit: The Indian Institutes of Technology and the Social Life of Caste," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57, no. 2 (2015): 291–322.
33 Deshpande, "Caste and Castelessness"; Subramanian, "Making Merit."
34 Deshmukh, *Course of My Life*, 254–55.
35 C.D. Deshmukh, "Commonwealth Universities Congress (1963)," in *Aspects of Development*, ed. C.D. Deshmukh (New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, 1972), 237–38. See also Eric Ashby's opening address to the Congress. Ashby's tripartite classification of universities as (a) a national investment in high-level manpower, (b) a consumer good, (c) a civic right and his broad linking of this to the systems in place in Britain, Canada, and Australia, respectively, is of enduring interest. Eric Ashby, "Africans as Policymakers in Their Own Universities," *London Times*, July 16, 1963, in Subject file # 96, H.N. Kunzru Papers, NMML. These and several other articles were retyped and circulated to UGC members.
36 Ibid., 239. See, for instance, papers of the Planning Commission, Education Division, August 1960, Box 4, Tara Chand Papers, NMML. For a foreign consultant's view on these debates in Indian education, see F. Champion Ward, "Problems and Promises of Education in India, 1958," Ford Foundation Report, FFA.
37 Deshmukh, *Course of My Life*, 269–270.
38 See Steven C. Wheatley, "The Partnerships of Foundations and Research Universities," in *American Foundations*, ed. Hammack and Enheier, 85–86.
39 Buechner came to India as visiting professor under the Wheat Loan Scheme. Like the Fulbright fellowship, this scheme was initiated to promote international understanding. W.W. Buechner's report on trip as visiting professor to India, 1957, Subject file # 3, D.S. Kothari Papers, NMML. For a contemporary account of the many collaborations these schemes made possible, see R.O. Olson, "Cooperation in Higher Education—India and the United States," 1960. Ford Foundation Report, FFA.
40 D.S. Kothari et al., *Report of the Education Commission 1964–66* (New Delhi: Ministry of Education, 1966), 404.
41 A critique of this drift is in Meghnad Saha's 1952 speech in Parliament. A summary of the recommendations of the West German Science Council for development of scientific institutions 1962 are in Subject file # 5, Kothari Papers, NMML.
42 Kothari, *Report of the Education Commission*, 415.

43 Ibid., 3.
44 Ibid., 421; papers of the Planning Commission, Education Division, August 1960 in Box 4, Tara Chand Papers, NMML.
45 Justice P.N. Sapru, Convocation address on first graduation ceremony at Barahseni College Aligarh, December 17, 1951. A copy of this address was sent to Tara Chand and is available in Box 53, Tara Chand Papers, NMML.
46 Tara Chand to Justice Sapru, January 15, 1952, ibid.
47 Note by I.N. Menon, Papers of the Planning Commission, Education Division, August 1960 in Box 4, Tara Chand Papers, NMML.
48 It is worth noting here that these debates have resurfaced in contemporary India, as a skills-based education is pitted against a more "humanist"-centered education. See Dhruv Raina, "Transformations in the World of Higher Learning: Changing Norms and Values of Universities and Research Institutes in India," in *Science, Technology and Development in India: Encountering Values,* ed. Rajeswari S. Raina (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2015), 104–18; Sam Pitroda et al., *National Knowledge Commission* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2007).
49 Krishna Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education: A study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas* (London: Sage, 2005).
50 K.G. Saiyidain and H.C. Gupta, *Access to Higher Education in India: A Depth Study of University Admission Procedures*, Sponsored by UNESCO and International Association of Universities (New Delhi, 1962), 2, 24.
51 Ibid., 71, 76.
52 Ibid., 29–30. Saiyidain added the observations of President Ayub Khan from in-depth study of Pakistan, which saw worse pass percentages than the averages in India: "We want that only the deserving and the meritorious get into the portals of higher education. We want quality not quantity. We can do with lesser number of people provided they have the proper training and patriotism to take the country on the desired way." Ayub Khan Convocation Address at Dacca University, 1961, quoted in ibid., 51.
53 Ibid., 70–71.
54 Ibid., 49. Emphasis mine.
55 Notes on a UGC meeting, April 4, 1962, file # 103, Speeches of D.S. Kothari, Kothari Papers, NMML.
56 Kothari, *Report of the Education Commission*, 97–98.
57 Ibid., 400; for a record note of meeting with Dr. Jose Correa of UNESCO in April 1962 when the budget for these centers and Soviet assistance was being discussed, see file # 62, Speeches of D.S. Kothari, Kothari Papers, NMML. For an extended discussion of how these centers of advanced study might work, see Kothari, *Report of the Education Commission*, 279–83.
58 Summary of the Robbins Report, *New Scientist*, October 24, 1963, in Subject file # 96, H.N. Kunzru Papers, NMML.
59 P.M.S. Blackett, "The Universities and the Developing Countries," Convocation Lecture, University of Leeds, 1964, ibid.
60 File 73-1/47—ODI; File 2-3/47—ODI (C2); File 18-6/53 G. 3, Ministry of Education, NAI.
61 See, for instance, notes from the Finance Ministry in file 18-6/53 G. 3, Ministry of Education, NAI.
62 File F. 20-32/55-A.1 (U5), Ministry of Education, NAI. In 2017, Wright's complaint bears closer scrutiny as African students across India have been increasingly subject to racist attacks.

63 Note by Nehru, May 25, 1955 in ibid.
64 Notes in the Ministry of Education, May 13, 1959, sign unclear, in ibid.
65 Humayun Kabir, Note for Cabinet regarding increase in the number of scholarships for students from abroad selected for studies in Indian universities, September 2, 1952 in file 2-45/51—S 3, Ministry of Education, NAI.
66 B.N. Nanda, September 18, 1951 in ibid.
67 Olson, "Cooperation in Higher Education," FFA.
68 Letter dated August 14, 1959, 4. Papers of K.G. Saiyidain, Private Archive, Delhi.
69 See, for instance, letter by B.K. Monye Ogol of Kenya writing from Sevagram Wardha to D.N. Saksena in the Ministry of Education, February 11, 1954 in file 4-8/53—S3, Ministry of Education, NAI.
70 Tara Chand to all Provincial governments, February 18, 1949; also, Memorandum of the Modified Overseas Scholarships Scheme, March 26, 1949 in file 18-1/49—S5, Ministry of Education, NAI.
71 *Kothari Commission Report*, 279–81.
72 K.G. Saiyidain, *Education and the Art of Living*, The Julius and Rosa Sachs Endowment Fund Lectures (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959), 5.
73 Ibid., 12.
74 The contributions of these select centers have also been highly uneven. See Partha Chatterjee et al., *Social Science Research Capacity in South Asia: A Report*, Vol. 6, SSRC Working Paper Series (New York: SSRC, 2002).
75 Rudolph and Rudolph, *Education and Politics in India*, 78.
76 Deshpande, "Caste and Castelessness," 39.

11

"The World Has Changed": Development, Land Reform, and the Ethical Work of India's Independence

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In 1950, two young students in Benares came together in the days after their matriculation exams to write a short play, which they declared to be in the "Indian mold," and not unduly tainted by foreign playwrights' penchant for melodrama.[1] An English play, they contended, was usually sustained by bloodshed, but the best Indian playwrights of the day "wrote beautifully on welfare-related subjects."

The *Zamindar-Kisan Natak* [Landlord-Peasant Drama] was written in straightforward Hindi, save for the comedic role afforded to a rustic, Bhojpuri-speaking jester. It begins with the fourth wall already broken: before the curtain rises, a director consults with one of the play's dancers. "Independence is here at last," he declares, "and yet the country's exploiters keep on exploiting through their own logic and rules." The naïve director wonders what religious epic might suit the vexing economic and social conditions of a newly independent nation, suggesting the life of Harishchandra, the mythic king and exemplar for a moral life, or perhaps that of the devotee Prahlada, the saintly child of the Puranas known for his piety in the face of paternal abuse. The dancer rejects each of these suggestions with a good-natured laugh, proposing instead "a drama staged for the welfare of the country, in a free and easy language." He puts forth the idea of a play about landlords and their tenants, which might "show the situation that our peasants are in. If the country's condition is dire, and we're all in it together, a play like this might show the way forward."

The realist drama that ensues centers around Ramdas, a poor tenant and ardent Congress supporter who, from a thatched hut at the edge of the village, laments the disparity between "those with cars and those with horse-carts." The object of his ire is Lalaji, the village *thakur* whose money never runs out, and who "lives by sucking the pulse of the country." Ramdas is devastated that after independence, the lot of India's peasants is still no better than that of the buffaloes which roam the nearby fields. Yet he is stirred from self-pity by the exhortations of his wife, Sukhiya. "After disappointment," she asserts, as Lalaji's lackeys approach to collect his rent, "deep hope always swells inside. Don't you feel this revolutionary hope?" She urges her

husband, in the name of independence, to make a new organization to help farmers resist the collection of rent, since "no oppressors' injustice can stand up to a unified organization."

Yet Lalaji is as perplexed by the thought of revolution as his peasants are galvanized by it. "I don't understand what's happened to our people," he mutters from the opulence of his stately residence. "They oppose us at every turn." One advisor proffers an explanation. "Lalaji," he fawns, "after self-rule, these saps have lost the plot. They don't understand the first thing about a good person's intents. They want their independence alone, and are interrupting us in the work of independence." The *thakur* vows to heed his advisor's advice to "crush the peasants so badly that no one will ever remember them. What, after all, will the Nehru government be able to do?"

But as Lalaji bears down upon his insurrectionary peasants, he cannot help but be impressed by their collaborative spirit. Ramdas and his followers declare themselves to be Gandhi's followers as well as Nehru's, and vow to withhold revenue from their landlord and reserve it, instead, for the village *panchayat*. One by one, Lalaji's goons are won over to the side of the peasants—and so, too, is the policeman who the landlord tries to bribe to intimidate the farmers. "Lalaji," the constable declares, "you must understand that the world has changed. The exploiters of the world are getting reformed. You must sacrifice your ancient ways if an ideal society is to be created." Finally, the chastened landlord repents, proffering up his own purse to the spirited farmers' organization.

The moralistic play offers up little in the way of suspense or subtlety; it is not without reason that the script garnered little public attention or literary acclaim. Yet if the students' end-of-semester play had the air of fantastical optimism, it was an optimism widely shared in the north Indian political and ethical imagination of the postcolonial moment. If independence, three years on, was ushering in new political institutions and possibilities, so too was it calling upon citizens to imagine new visions of political morality, and imperatives of sacrifice and renewal which owed inspiration from, but no partisan allegiance to, Gandhian ethics and Nehruvian institutions.

The two young men who wrote the *Zamindar-Kisan Natak* were writing in a long tradition of vernacular literatures positing the distinct cultural resources of the Indian peasantry.[2] Yet where the critical question of land was concerned, these literatures, in the decades prior to independence, were unfailingly fatalistic. Half a century earlier, Fakir Mohan Senapati's cunning Oriya-language *Six Acres and a Third* dramatized the cleaves of village life in the wake of the rupture wrought by colonial rule.[3] Senapati's calculating village landlord, Ramachandra Mangaraj, manipulates a changing imperial legal order to expand his demesne, before "Judge Sahib" intervenes and sells off his *zamindari* to an enterprising lawyer. As the villagers wonder what will change after the seizure of the estate, old-timers warn against the expectation of change. "Oh, horse," they say, recalling a gloomy saying, "what differences does it make to you if you are stolen by a thief? You do not get much to eat here; you will not get much to eat there. No matter who becomes the next master, we will remain his slaves."

The vision of the *Zamindar-Kisan Natak* departs radically from this earlier literary gloom. Even without recourse to the law, these villagers draw upon the "revolutionary hope" wrought of independence to ask for their due share. And the

rural order, in turn, is radically upended, not through statist fiat or the seizure of hereditary property, but instead through the recognition of landlords themselves that the times have indeed changed. The new ethics of the postcolonial order will, in this vision, see *zamindars* and tenants partner together as they work toward the constable's "ideal society," characterized by agrarian egalitarianism of a previously unimaginable sort.

In the years surrounding India's independence and Partition, the abstracted promises of self-rule were quickly and contentiously transformed into "the work of independence," as politicians and citizens alike wrestled with the particulars of the nation they were to build. Questions of land and its proper allocation and use had animated peasant struggle and nationalist foment in the decades prior to independence: the promise of independence, in many regions, was frequently subordinate to local debates over ownership, rights, and the proper conditions of landholding and village life. Debates over land, in turn, emerged as central sites of popular claim-making in a new state searching for practical programs to remake society and politics in tandem.[4] Animated by histories of agrarian oppression dating to Permanent Settlement and earlier, Indian planners and citizens envisioned new schemes for remaking the structure of agrarian holdings. And placing stock in the transformative idiom of land reform, many Indian citizens advanced the possibilities of a productive and equitable rural order suited to the designs of a modernizing state.

Yet true to other projects of anticolonial and postcolonial nation-building, the case for land reform was often made in terms which appealed to notions of moral and ethical reform—key parallel projects to the project of economic reconstruction. Congress planners of various hues, in the postcolonial moment, suggested to citizens that land reform would proceed not only from the dictates of proper political economy, but by the collective work of an ethical populace attuned to national ends. Citizens who had been privileged by the inequity of colonial rule, animated by the revolutionary possibilities of India's "tryst with destiny," would abdicate entitlements and shed excess—perhaps nowhere as prominently as in India's villages.[5]

Yet while whiggish in character, this vision was, in fact, the democratization and vernacularization of a conservative ethic which had grown prominent in the waning years of the nationalist struggle. The establishment of the Republic of India, its partition into two nation-states, and the concomitant need to fashion a formal program of development required a "passive revolution," and a repudiation of more radical idioms of social and political change.[6] India's postcolonial leadership, personified in Jawaharlal Nehru's seventeen-year premiership, disavowed the radical elements of the anticolonial campaign. Proclaiming the boisterous politics of the freedom struggle fundamentally unsuited to India's processual postcolonial democracy, the Congress mainstream worked to transform revolutionary agendas for land and capital into gradualist programs bonded by the language of debates and discipline.[7] And ultimately, the "passive revolution" ushered in by independence was revealed most starkly by functional failure in the realm of land reform.

"The only way in which agrarian transformation could take place" in such a passive revolution, Sudipta Kaviraj averred, "was through a conservative, gradualist and 'molecular' process."[8] This "molecular" ethos of postcolonial development, this

chapter contends, found wide expression in visions of ethical transformation in the process of land reform. Care, loving, kindness, and the softening of hearts would be the leavening needed to advance the thorny "work of independence," bypassing the political untenable work of more radical reform. If the courts would not and could not advance a more full-throated vision of land reform, and India's freedom-fighters-turned-bureaucrats were quick to disavow programs of seizure and agitation, citizens' suitable ethical conduct and affect was extolled as the key to proper postcolonial development.

Recent work on economic thought in postcolonial India has begun to erode the putative divide between "Gandhian" and "Nehruvian" idioms of development, probing the conceptual fissures within these two strains of thought, and situating them within broader intellectual and institutional histories.[9] A critical intellectual location of Gandhian thought has foregrounded competing notions of sacrifice within it, highlighting both its indeterminacy and the areas from which the Mahatma's associates drew inspiration during his life and after his death.[10] Historians attuned to the political and social uptake of Gandhi's ideas after his death have shown how Gandhian idioms remained vibrant sites for developmentalist thought within the state and beyond it.[11] The veil of confidentiality that has hidden away the bulk of Jawaharlal Nehru's papers until very recently has precluded a similar reckoning with the prime minister's thought. Yet earlier and incomplete efforts to map a genealogy of state-driven development in India are now being supplanted by critical work on the fierce internecine disagreement among Nehru's circle of "developmentalist" thinkers.[12] The state adoption of the language of village uplift has been probed in a transnational and Cold War context alike, revealing the inadequacy of earlier, monolithic accounts of postcolonial development.[13] Situating the ethical imaginary of independence within these new histories helps reconcile the stark tension between nationalist thought and postcolonial development planning, and suggests how planners might have imagined the possibility of shared progress without the risk of radical social and political upheaval.

This ethical vision of nation-building was, it bears repeating, the stuff of fantasy: deeply entrenched institutions of land and labor would not crumble in the name of equity, no matter how deeply India's planners clung to the hopes of peaceable development. And the romance of the postcolonial moment faded quickly, as the promise of planning lost its luster and landlords stymied and captured the legal machinations of land reform.[14] Yet ethical reconstruction was central in the two decades prior to this institutional foundering. In the 1930s, land reform emerged as a national imperative, first through the machinations of India's *kisan* [peasant] movements, and subsequently, in the embrace of the idea by the Indian National Congress itself. With the rise of this idea came the notion that land reform should go beyond the project of redistribution to usher in *kisan raj* itself—a rule of peasants who, consisted of a different stock and moral orientation themselves, would govern justly and invert the erstwhile social order.

As independence dawned, and the abstract promises of land reform needed to be translated into concrete programs, popular narratives of the process drew upon notions of the ethical to offer a nonradical solution to the conundrum faced by the

Nehruvian state: how to actualize reform without courting insurrectionary action unsuited to the new state. This possibility, however, grew increasingly improbable as new programs—from the first Five-Year Plan in 1951 to the passage of the first *zamindari* abolition legislation that same year—winnowed down the space for alternate solutions. Other developments began to strip the state of its power to invoke the ethical: 1951 also marked the beginning of the Bhoodan Movement, the popular campaign, led by Vinoba Bhave, to redistribute holdings voluntarily from landholders to the landless, and the accelerated ceding of the ethical to nonstate actors.

"Like a Tract of Coalfield": Land reform and Kisan Raj

By independence, the exploitative and inequitable character of *zamindari* and other "intermediary" systems was widely acknowledged—as, increasingly, was their concomitant inefficiency.[15] In contrast to the presumptions of Permanent Settlement, the emerging agronomic and political consensus was that small farmers used land more intensively, and as owners, cared more for that land than tenants. Fueled by hopes of redistribution in this vein, the struggle for land occasionally eclipsed the larger national struggle in certain regions, including Telegana and Tebhaga. Four key pillars can be identified in the postcolonial effort to reform land holdings: the abolition of intermediaries was identified, first and foremost, as the most urgent reform to be undertaken by the new state. Tenancy reform and the amelioration of rights and conditions of holding land were identified as a secondary concern. And the intertwined projects of land consolidation and the establishment of land ceilings animated a later strand of postcolonial reform efforts.

The Indian constitution, in designating land as a state subject, would allow for a plurality of legislative processes and outcomes, differing greatly by region. However, across the board, and in the decade following independence, the project of abolishing intermediaries had been largely accomplished, even as the other projects languished. A decade after independence, all but five states—Gujarat, Kerala, Orissa, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh—had passed comprehensive legislation to abolish intermediaries. This work largely eliminated the *zamindari* class, and by best estimates, benefited around twenty to twenty-five million tenant households. Yet the reform did little to change tenures or revenue systems.[16] Landlords often claimed certain lands for their own "self-cultivation" to escape the need to surrender their estates. Propertied interests brought multiple cases to India's courts which challenged new land reform legislation via the constitution's protection of fundamental rights, until the passage of the first amendment protected estate acquisition explicitly.[17] Even with this protection, however, *zamindari* abolition was frequently subverted in practice.[18] The first round of land reforms, B.R. Tomlinson notes, "largely failed to live up to the planners' expectations."[19]

The processes and idioms of the agrarian debates of the 1950s drew robustly upon the particulars of the *kisan* movements of the 1930s, held in suspension during the headiest days of the freedom struggle. Land reform had been a subject of agitation for at least four decades prior to this early moment, finding inclusion even in the

first convening documents of the Indian National Congress.[20] The structure of India's agrarian holdings was increasingly as seen deficient in two regards.[21] On the one hand, Permanent Settlement had created a landlord class of *zamindars* and *jagirdars* prioritizing the extraction of rent over the improvement of agricultural lands.[22] A parallel critique on grounds of productivity, however, held that India's land holdings were too fractured to cultivate efficiently.

It was against this backdrop that provincial Kisan Sabhas—peasant organizations—had agitated for reforms from the 1920s onward.[23] Under the leadership of N. G. Ranga, the All-India Kisan Sabha, founded in 1936, had pressed for the abolition of *zamindari* without compensation; by the 1940s, the group had become a formidable competitor to the Congress in the Indian countryside, where contestations over land frequently eclipsed the presumedly larger national struggle.[24] Yet the Kisan Sabha and the Congress Party shared an understanding of India's agrarian crisis forged during the Great Depression.[25] The vertical linkages of India's rural agricultural networks had been fragmented, and the faltering of traditional credit networks had demonstrated the fragility of India's rural economy. The Congress leadership, drawing upon Kisan Sabha analysis, saw India's agricultural predicament as one rooted in landlordism and the extraction of rent, alongside the inability of traditional credit suppliers to function during an unprecedented liquidity crisis.[26] As the Bengal Famine brought the questions of rural production, credit, and sustenance to national consciousness, the Kisan Sabha braided together the ends of agrarian reform and the bolstering of the national granary.[27] The Congress soon imported many of the *kisan* movement's demands into their own charter, adopting the abolition of *zamindari* as a national party demand in 1946.

Beyond platform particulars, however, the 1930s saw the emergence of a particular vision, held in abeyance until independence, of an incipient Indian sociopolitical order. The earliest critiques of the decade had seen the case against *zamindari* land holding and exploitation made in economic, or legalistic terms.[28] This formation remained trenchant well until the end of the decade: a somewhat characteristic 1938 analysis of *zamindari* in Andhra Pradesh by the provincial Congress Committee maintained that the legal analysis of agrarian holdings must be weighted toward the

> economic basis of modern politics, which is now re-cognized in all the world-countries to-day whether soviet, fascist, democratic or despotic, and they are all revolutionizing, reforming or readjusting laws and national policies from the view point of national economy and devising ways and means for the economic, political, and cultural advancement of the toiling masses.[29]

Even landholders, the Congress Committee somewhat improbably declared, agreed that "welfare of the peasants ought to be the chief concern of the *zamindar*." (Less-partial observers were less convinced that *zamindars* would readily abandon their own self-interest. "The past has been so kind to the landlord," civil servant Malcolm Darling dryly observed in 1930, "that he cannot believe that the future may be harsh.")[30]

But as the decade advanced, these legal and economic formulations shared increased conceptual legitimacy with the notion of *kisan raj*—a rule of peasants,

diversely interpreted. Drawing to varying degrees upon socialist thought and the heuristics of Gandhian *Swaraj*, the vision of *kisan raj* animated later notions that independence should be accompanied by a new ethical order. The term may have first been used by N. G. Ranga, who, speaking to the Second Andhra Ryot's Conference, declared the aim of the kisan movement to be *kisan raj*.[31] As early as the 1930s, *kisan* politicians were sketching out what a rule of peasant-farmers freed from *zamindari* might resemble. "Congress struggles," K. D. Paliwal, a Socialist politician from Agra, would frequently proclaim during the no-rent campaigns of the 1930s, "would usher in *Swaraj*, which means *Kisan raj*, when *kisans* will have the power to dismiss officials from *thanedar* to Governor."[32]

The notion of *kisan raj* would animate debates over the proper orientation of Indian society well into the twentieth century: the peasant leader Chaudhuri Charan Singh would, in 1979–80, serve as prime minister in an unstable coalition of parties under the Janata banner, skewering India's aim of industrial development as inimical to the agrarian character of the country.[33] But this vision dated back at least as far as the late 1930s, when, as a newly elected member of the United Provinces Assembly, Singh had proposed a 50 percent quota in public administration for the sons of farmers. Such a representation, he argued, would ensure that the agrarian character of Indian society was represented in its political institutions. "The social philosophy of a member of the non-agricultural, urban classes," he explained, presaging an argument he would make three decades later, "is entirely different from that of a person belonging to the agricultural rural classes."[34] *Kisan Raj* was an aim for Singh, as well, yet he differed from many of his compatriots in his defense of the middle peasant: his rejection of farm collectivization and land nationalization put him at odds with many more socialistically minded peers.[35]

The years of the Bengal Famine saw India's socialist and communist leadership break with Congress over the question of agrarian revolution, even as all increasingly articulated the importance of ending landlordism and remaking village society. "The crux of the agrarian revolution," one socialist commentary on the Bombay Plan of 1944 read,

> is to sweep away the power of the landowners and the money lenders. That is why every national struggle in India from 1920 onwards results in the direct seizure of land by the peasants. That is why every struggle leads the bourgeoisie to seek a compromise. Every peasant uprising strikes terror into the hearts of the *Zamindars* and the bourgeoisie![36]

Yet the ferocity of a vision of and end to *zamindari* and its concomitant inequity grew more and more universal. "All the rent receiving interest in land shall be abolished," Abul Hashim wrote in 1940 in his capacity as general secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. "The interest of the peasants shall be protected and all rents shall be standardized and all forms of iniquitous impositions and levies shall be abolished. […] Permanent *Zamindary* settlement shall be forthwith abolished and agriculture rescued from being an uneconomic occupation."[37]

As self-rule neared, memories of agrarian exploitation and famine reanimated by the Bengal Famine suffused fictitious representations of India's peasantry: a venal, decrepit landlord class was precluding India from the twinned promises of national development and social reform. *Dharti ke Lal* [Sons of the Soil], K.A. Abbas's searing 1946 cinematic portrayal of a farmer driven to Calcutta during the Bengal Famine, depicts a family forced to give up its prize cow to a usurious *zamindar* in exchange for revenue held in arrears.[38] "Today," the film's protagonist declares, decrying an unjust moral order, "the son is not able to save his own mother." Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers!*, a novel published the same year as independence, used the backdrop of the same famine to portray the *zamindar* as the impediment to national progress.[39] The optimistic grandson sketches out a vision for independent India's development, where redistribution of land would be coupled with the use of modern science to grow "food for all—and a surplus." Asking his grandfather why the hereditary landlord would take no interest in improved production, the book's narrator cites Permanent Settlement as the beginning of landlordism which had no regard for the peasant's humanity. To the landlord, "the peasantry was not in their eyes a living mass, it was like a tract of coalfield out of which you hewed coal for profit and more profit, mindless of its exhaustion." It was this avaricious view that the moral imperatives of self-rule seemed to have the power to overturn, through the softening of affects and the changing of hearts. With exhortation from the new state, landlords might be persuaded to see beyond the tract of coalfield, and to recognize the peasantry's inherent humanity.

"The Landlord May Cooperate": Indian land and Indian pasts

As the colonial yielded to the postcolonial, the inequitable organization of village life had taken on a moral valence. The nationalist struggle was predicated, in some sense, upon the promise of a new historical juncture which would upend an unjust social order. K. A. Abbas—whose postcolonial films like *Awara* and *Shree 420* would lay out similar visions of citizens reformed by law and the state's loving affect—recalled a chance meeting with Nehru at the age of seventeen. The future prime minister urged Abbas and his fellow students of history to leave the classroom to observe history in the making.[40] "Do you have some villages in and around your university?" Nehru asked. "Go there—ask questions of the villagers—whose land are they tilling? What does [the landlord] do? What are they doing? How much share does he take away at the time of each harvest? What remains for the tillers?" The nationalist campaign contained within it the promise of a reformed agrarian order that would underpin the ethical foundations of the new state; the peasantry was seen the repository of a distinct moral order.

With independence dawning, Congress borrowed vituperative language from the bombast of *kisan* movements and socialists, declaring that independent India's food production would be "hampered and rendered ineffective by landlordism and the vested parasitic interests, as a result of which tremendous [re]sources of land and peasant labour remain unused in saving in the country from starvation."[41] Veteran Congressman K. D. Malaviya would later recall that in the years leading up to

independence, "the problem of Indian freedom was directly linked with the question of the emancipation of the peasantry. The demand of national freedom had to be integrated with the task of ending peasant exploitation."[42] And Gandhi, in an interview with American journalist Louis Fisher, several years before independence, articulated a uniquely moral vision for how *zamindars*, at independence, would renounce their claims in the interests of national development:[43]

LF: What is your program for the improvement of the lot of the peasantry?

MKG: The peasants would take the land. We would not have to tell them to take it. They would take it.

LF: Should the landlords be compensated?

MKG: No, that would be fiscally impossible. You see, our gratitude to our millionaire friends does not prevent us from saying such things. The village would become a self-governing unit living its own life. In the villages, the peasants will stop paying taxes. They will make salt despite official prohibition. Their next step will be to seize the land.

LF: With violence?

MKG: There may be violence, but then again the landlord may cooperate.

LF: You are an optimist.

MKG: They might cooperate by fleeing.

LF: Or they might organize violent resistance?

MKG: There may be fifteen days of chaos, but I think we could soon bring that under control.

Visions of chaos quickly controlled took root in meetings that Gandhi held with his intellectual interlocutors, including Madhav Desai and J. C. Kumarappa. The notion that the landlord might cooperate was not conjured up *ex nihilo*; rather, it drew upon contested notions of gift-giving in Indian contexts—notions which have provided fodder for anthropologists for at least six decades.[44] Yet even if more staid economists and planners preferred to speak in pamphlets and occasional papers, they intermittently deployed language that suggested a more total project of reform than mere economics.

Nasir Ahmed Khan, then a 25-year-old lecturer in the economics department at the University of Lucknow, published a brief treatise on the imperative of *zamindari* abolition the year of independence.[45] The senior Congressman A. P. Jain, later minister of food and agriculture, contributed a forward to Khan's book, where he averred that his own "faith and conviction in the abolition of *zamindari* has not grown from a study of books or theories. It is an inborn product of experience." His father had been a small landlord, and he had grown up with great empathy for India's *zamindars*. Yet "in the course of my political work," he declared, "I saw the woes and sorrows of

the peasant. He worked hard and had not enough to eat. The fruit of his labor was taken away by the landlord and the *sahukar*." Nothing short of a wholesale end to *zamindari*, Jain declared, could better the lot of India's peasantry, and of the nation itself by extension.

The convergence between a young, left-leaning economist and an ascendant Congress politician would fracture within a decade, mirroring larger shifts within India's political establishment. Khan would join India's Planning Commission in 1958, while Jain would take up the cause of the middle peasant cultivator, leaving the Congress for the free-market Swatantra Party in 1959. Yet at this revolutionary moment, Jain could lend his imprimatur to Khan's denouncement of India's landlords, who were claiming, against hope, to represent the best interests of India's peasantry. Jain, from his vantage in Lucknow, decried the daily *Pioneer* for serving as a mouthpiece for their antediluvian designs, giving space to landlords "bandying the just and rightful claims of these benefactors of mankind and backbone of India's peasantry, showering encomiums on their past meritorious record and hurling brickbats on those who, possessed by an irrational socialistic fervor, are madly planning their liquidation."

With the adoption of new *zamindari* abolition legislation in the provincial assembly, Jain marveled, one might have expected that "the *zamindars* would have got the sense of the house, and, instead of forming a front against the popular clamor demanding their liquidation, adopted measures which would be beneficial to themselves in the long run." But India's landed, he saw, had no interest in forwarding the new order, which Jain then believed would be predicated upon collective farming and agricultural collectivization. Progress would be contingent, he suggested, on landlords recognizing the changed imperatives of the day—those "measures" which offered short-term loss in the interests of enduring shared progress. Yet landlords did not, unsurprisingly, clamor to liquidate their own estates. M. S. Randhawa, one of the chief architects of post-Partition resettlement, found himself contending with large landlords who had arrived from Pakistan as refugees, insisting that their hereditary estates be reconstructed in India. "It was unfair," Randhawa paraphrased their argument, "to take advantage of the misfortunate which had befallen the refugee landlords, and if any socialistic experiment was to be tried they should not be singled out from the rest of the population of India."[46]

India's postcolonial planners looked far and wide for inspiration as they sought a program for radical land reform: the Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition Committee, convening in 1948, studied agrarian reform and collective farming in Romania, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Mexico, and Palestine.[47] Yet, ultimately, the imperative of land reform was rooted, for many planners, in the notion that landlordism itself was foreign to Indian soil. For Peshotan Nasserwanji Driver, a professor of agricultural economics at Poona's College of Agriculture, who served on the Zamindari Abolition Committee of the United Provinces Government, the objection to *zamindari* was not only economic, but moral and historical in nature.[48] "Nothing has been more indigenous in India," Driver wrote in a 1949 treatise on land reform, "than the communal ownership of land," a fact "noticed by almost all writers—from the conservative law-maker Maine to the revolutionary law-breaker Marx." Yet independence, Driver asserted, would

now allow India to do away with the "leisured class of ignorant parasites" wrought of *zamindari*. No compensation was strictly necessary for the seizure of *zamindari* estates and the antisocial property rights vested therein—and no compensation for these lands was certainly preferable to full compensation—yet Driver was willing to concede some compensation to *zamindars* in the interests of persuading the wealthy "to invest their wealth in agriculture and in industries." *Zamindari* was not merely a blight on India's poor, Driver wrote, but to the *zamindars* themselves, who "have no chance whatsoever to develop their character."

The fillip that agrarian reform would offer to ex-landlords themselves speaks to the braiding of two projects of reform: that of moral conduct and of proper political economy. Driver's book, published in 1949, came out in the same year as the Congress' Agrarian Reforms Committee delivered their final report.[49] Convened in December 1947 by Rajendra Prasad, the Committee was chaired by J. C. Kumarappa, and had as members M. L. Dantwala, a well-respected agricultural economist at the Bombay School of Economics, and N. G. Ranga of the All-India Kisan Congress. The Committee had been charged with making "recommendations about agrarian reforms rising out of the abolition of *zamindari* system," and its report, issued in July, has been described by Francine Frankel as "the most threatening document ever drafted by an official committee of the Congress party with respect to the property interests of the landed castes."[50] Disavowing capitalist agriculture while admitting its potential for greater efficiency, the report did not go so far as to endorse collective farming, suggesting instead that two types of farming should be encouraged in independent India. Where holdings were smaller than the "basic" size—that is, unable to provide food and livelihood for a family of five—they should ideally be pooled into joint cooperative farms. For those holdings between basic and "optimum" size, family farming would be recommended, but only as an intermediate stage: ultimately, the Committee envisioned an end to family farms and the emergence of cooperative farming as the dominant pattern for agricultural production in India.

Yet the Report, accompanied by a blistering note of dissent by N. G. Ranga, is suffused not only with the language of political and economic reconstruction, but the reform of character and ethical practice itself. A peasant-cultivator's character, personality, and moral universe are to be fertilized by his participation in a reconstructed Indian economy. This, capitalist farming is unsuitable to India because it "may suppress [an] individual's personality. […] The individual peasant may find himself lost in the huge organization of the collective dominated by the technicians."

This language stoked the ire of those who might have preferred more concrete direction. "What exactly does the Committee mean," one perplexed agricultural economist at Allahabad University wrote,

> when it says that agricultural policy should be so framed as to provide an opportunity for the development of the farmer's personality? Does the latter need the mental climate of unfettered private enterprise for its full flowering? Or can the farmer's personality still develop when he is told to do this and that and is forbidden to do certain other things?[51]

That economist may have been frustrated, but he suggests to us, from the vantage of seven decades, that the intertwining of a moral, historical, and social vision with a more sober economic program was an integral part of the broad imagination about land and its proper use.

Those who would defend *zamindari* in its dying days belied fears of a moral order shifting as well as an economic one: for votaries of a certain "traditionalism," landlordism in a munificent vein represented the foundational cornerstone of the agrarian order. Vallabhai Patel, speaking in Delhi in May 1950, urged Congress delegates to ask G. B. Pant, about the "sleepless nights [he had spent since starting] this question of abolition of *zamindari*."[52] The former Uttar Pradesh premiere would no doubt attest to the miserable state of the provinces' former serfs. Now, he declared, "they have gained freedom. They now work on their own lands which used to be owned by other people. So, where will these other people go? What will they do? In this country, after the war, any amount of arms are available. So, some of them take to dacoities." For Patel, "abolition of vested interests is a good thing, but indecent haste will destroy everything and delay the thing which we want. […] The consequences of it have to be seen."

A similar argument—that crime and disorder would emerge in the wake of a stabilizing social system—was advanced, characteristically, by Begum Qudsia Aizaz Rasul, then the only Muslim woman to serve as a member of the Constituent Assembly of India. In a note of dissent to the Uttar Pradesh *Zamindari* Abolition Committee Report of 1948, Rasul regretted "that the Report is disfigured by passages of hysterical rancor against the *zamindars*, as a class. They are denounced as parasites, as racketeers, as oppressors of the tenantry and as the source of all the ills of rural society."[53] Abolition of *zamindari*, she declared, would lead to "the disappearance of a real middle class which has held together village society in spite of wars, political upheavals and economic blizzards. […] Chaos and anarchy which will engulf not only the victims but very likely the authors as well of this disastrous policy." But if India's crumbling landlord class clung to notions of the "stabilizing influence of the *zamindar*," Congressmen like A. P. Jain offered clear rejoinders. "I warn the landlords," he wrote on the pages of Lucknow's *Hindustan* in 1947, not "to insist too much on the past, lest they should find that their great-great Grand-father or great-great-great Grandfather was a dacoit or a highway man or a corrupt official or a court jester or a cheat or a forger."[54] For Jain, and others who saw in self-rule the crafting of a new present for India, the past was the font of primordial chauvinism just as easily as the as the source of stabilizing tradition.

Conclusion

Development planners and politicians in the new Republic of India, its independence won alongside the promise of fundamental social and economic transformation, advanced the possibility of socioeconomic change that would eschew violence and transcend even the most deeply entrenched class interests. Like the two young playwrights who imagined a village remade by epiphany, these planners imagined

a new state, magical in conception, that would don the garb of love, conscience, and morality to subdue the objections of erstwhile elites, charming them into complicity with a new socioeconomic order.[55] If India's developmental experience lent itself to dramaturgical language—from Nehru's "tryst with destiny" speech to Gunnar Myrdal's *Asian Drama* some fifteen years later—then India's elites had their prescribed roles to play, and would soften their interests with the leavening of proper affect and ethical conduct.[56]

Yet that revolutionary hope, manifest in popular, literary, and political visions of the transformative power of land reform, burnt brightly and was quickly consumed, its creative foment fading within years of independence. The ravages of Partition had already diminished the sense of a revolutionary epoch ushered in by self-rule; the anemic course of land reform, statutorily successful but practically moribund, lessened these hopes even further. This collapse was remarkably quick, nearing completion as early as the early years of the 1950s, when the first wave of land reform legislation underscored the need for muscular upheaval in place of participatory action. India's landlords would not preside easily and willingly over their own liquidation. India's Communist Party urged the Republic to "enforce abolition of landlordism without compensation and distribute land to the tillers."[57] But even more sober analyses perceived an increasing intractability in India's entrenched agrarian order. "Under present conditions," the *Eastern Economist* opined in 1951, "it seems that nothing less than a revolution will shift the swarms of *zamindars*, *malguzars*, *jagirdars*, tenure-holders, *thakedars*, *inamdars* and *mufidars* who batten on Indian agriculture."[58]

The sense that India's landlords—"the native garrisons of an alien imperialism," as K. D. Malaviya would write—were vestigial and recalcitrant in equal measure fueled mid-decade reinterpretations of India's recent past.[59] "Everybody except the *Zamindars* themselves and their feudal allies," one Calcutta economist declared, "everybody who is anybody in this subcontinent, clearly realizes the obvious need for the abolition of the system."[60] Under imperial rule, she wrote, "the majority of the Zamindars became an oppressive and blood-sucking parasitic lot, foisted on the vast masses of peasant proprietors of the country." This sense of exploitative difference suffused artistic representative, as well. The narrator of Krishan Chander's celebrated 1954 Urdu novel of the Telangana Rebellion, *Jab Khet Jage* [When the Fields Awake], a landlord's empathetic son, spoke of the peasants with whom he spent his childhood, who have with him "a love for the field and the feeling of hate that the field shines on the poor."[61] The narrator takes note of the different standards of living between landlords and their tenants, seeing "with my own eyes the oppression and horrors that the new way of life, together with the old way of life, had forced upon them."

There was much to laud in the crumbling of the formal strictures of landlordism. The prescient agricultural economist Daniel Thorner chronicled a number of promising transformations in 1962.[62] "Just as the once-lowliest of India have been coming up," Thorner wrote, "so the great landlords, the big *zamindars*, *taluqdars*, and *jagirdars* have been brought down." Certain landlords had seen the new order dawning, and the smartest among them had used compensatory money "to buy tractors and go

in for modern-style agriculture." Yet the sense that the project of self-rule would herald a new moral order to facilitate the new political and economic order had been replaced by a grayer vision wherein landlord and tenant were once again envisioned as fundamental adversaries.

In 1953, the Government of India's Films Division commissioned a young director, Krishna Gopal, to make a short feature on the reform of village life. Gopal, a rising star in the Films Division, shot *Towards a Better Society* from the vantage of a lower-caste peasant who narrates his social and economic ascendance made possible by new legislation.[63] A willful autodidact who moves from cowherd to schoolmaster, the narrator confounds the angry, if comically rendered, *zamindars* and brahmins of the village who would bar him and his family from schools and temples.

With new money and government scholarships, the narrator sends his son and daughter to the city for their education, only to storm angrily to the city to prevent his daughter from marrying without consultation. His would-be son-in-law, however, is revealed to be the son of a poor and presumably low-caste villager whose family has sacrificed and saved to send him to college to learn scientific farming. Won over, the narrator's wedding gift to the couple is an imposing tractor, purchased on a favorable government loan, which rumbles into his home village and splashes mud on the faces of the brahmins and former *zamindars*, taking "the die-hards" by surprise. "From the noise," the narrator gloats,

> they thought a war was on, and that the army was taking over. In a way it was true: a war *was* on, against prejudice and hidebound manners. Among the new soldiers were a trained teacher, a modern farmer, and an engineer—our children. The best lesson they have learned thus far is that each generation must fight this war without thought of surrender. How else can humanity march forward toward a better society?

If India's humanity were indeed marching toward a better society, it would now do so through the implements of legislation and in a struggle for justice against those who would deny it. But this legalistic and technocratic march stood in contrast to the earlier ethical vision of just a few years prior. For a moment, votaries of state planning had imagined that the state's ethical affect would help reconcile the divergent goals of the "passive revolution," ensuring stability in the midst of change and quiescence in the noise of popular politics. If India's landed elites would orient themselves toward the ethical imperatives of the new state, the course of national planning could continue without risking disorder or insurrection.

The failure of this moment ensured that the unfettered optimism of the *Zamindar-Kisan Natak*, where landlords would readily concede their privilege and take up the ethical mandate of the new state, had yielded to the gritty skirmishes of Krishna Gopal's fictionary village, where ascendant peasants would splash mud, and worse, upon their erstwhile masters. The project of nation-building would be undertaken through the machinations of law and legislation, the thought of a reformed moral imperium quickly abandoned at the dawn of the postcolonial.

Notes

1 Jhunnilal Prasad Kesari Phabhat and Gaurishankar Prasad Gupta, *Zamindar Kisan Natak [A Peasant-Landlord Drama]* (Varanasi: Bindeśvagī Prasāda Bukselara, 1950).
2 See Shashi Bhushan Upadhyay, "Premchand and the Moral Economy of Peasantry in Colonial North India." *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 5 (2011): 1227–59.
3 Fakir Mohan Senapati, *Six Acres and a Third: The Classic Nineteenth-Century Novel about Colonial India*, trans. Rabi Shankar Mishra (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 206.
4 See Benjamin Siegel, *Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
5 See Taylor C. Sherman, "From 'Grow More Food' to 'Miss a Meal': Hunger, Development and the Limits of Post-Colonial Nationalism in India, 1947–1957." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 36, no. 4 (December 2013): 571–88; Benjamin Siegel, "'Self-Help Which Ennobles a Nation': Development, Citizenship, and the Obligations of Eating in India's Austerity Years." *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 3 (2015): 1–44; Benjamin Siegel, "Modernizing Peasants and 'Master Farmers': Progressive Agriculture in Early Independent India." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37, no. 1 (May 2017): 64–85.
6 "Conservatory of the passive revolution," Partha Chatterjee famously averred, "the nation state now proceeds to find for 'the nation' a place in the global order of capital, while striving to keep the contradictions between capital and the people in perpetual suspension." Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986), 168–69.
7 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "'In the Name of Politics': Democracy and the Power of the Multitude in India." *Public Culture* 19, no. 1 (2007): 35–57.
8 Sudipta Kaviraj, "A Critique of the Passive Revolution," *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 45/47 (November 1, 1988): 2433.
9 Two early, important programs exhorting the transcendence of this divide are Sugata Bose, "Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development," in *International Development and the Social Sciences*, eds. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 45–63; David Washbrook, "The Rhetoric of Democracy and Development in Late Colonial India," in *Nationalism, Democracy, and Development: State and Politics in India*, eds. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 36–49. See also Benjamin Zachariah, *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History, C. 1930–50* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).
10 Leela Gandhi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900–1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 1–2; Ajay Skaria, *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).
11 Ornit Shani suggests that "a conception of citizenship rooted in Gandhian ideas, practices and institutions" offered means of access to state institutions to marginalized populations, provided templates for addressing group grievances, and allowed the state a resonant language to justify contentious decisions over research allocation. Taylor Sherman contends that Gandhian economic thought was not, as commonly held, marginalized in the first decade of independence, but rather offered an alternate site for political activism and non-state developmentalist work through figures like Vinoba Bhave. See Ornit Shani, "Gandhi, Citizenship and the Resilience of Indian

Nationhood," *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 6–7 (October 2011): 659–78; Taylor C. Sherman, "A Gandhian Answer to the Threat of Communism? Sarvodaya and Postcolonial Nationalism in India." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 53, no. 2 (April 1, 2016): 249–70.

12 C.A. Bayly, "The Ends of Liberalism and the Political Thoughts of Nehru's India." *Modern Intellectual History* 12, no. 3 (January 23, 2015): 1–22.

13 Subir Sinha, "Lineages of the Developmentalist State: Transnationality and Village India, 1900–1965." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 1 (2008): 57–90; Nicole Sackley, "The Village as Cold War Site: Experts, Development, and the History of Rural Reconstruction." *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (2011): 481–504; Nicole Sackley, "Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War." *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 4 (2013): 749–78; David C. Engerman, "Learning from the East: Soviet Experts and India in the Era of Competitive Coexistence." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33, no. 2 (2013): 227–38; Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

14 On the retreat of development planning, see Medha Kudaisya, "'A Mighty Adventure': Institutionalising the Idea of Planning in Postcolonial India, 1947–60." *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 4 (October 2008): 939–78.

15 An excellent review of the process of land reform is Sanjoy Chakravorty, *The Price of Land: Acquisition, Conflict, Consequence* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94–95.

16 Ibid., *passim*. P.C. Joshi suggested in a 1974 analysis that in India, land reform primarily served the interest of big peasants, who, while willing to partner with the rural poor to erode the power of large landlords, were unwilling to embark on a shared program to ameliorate the conditions of the agrarian poor. P.C. Joshi, "Land Reform and Agrarian Change in India and Pakistan since 1947: 1." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 1, no. 2 (January 1974): 164–85.

17 Specifically, these cases hinged around articles 14, 19, and 31 of the constitution. A legal review of these challenges is H.C.L. Merillat, "Abstract of Law and Land Reform in India." *Law & Society Review* 3, no. 2/3 (November 1, 1968): 295–97. A contemporary survey is Govindlal Dalsukhbhai Patel, *The Indian Land Problem and Legislation* (Bombay: N.M. Tripathi, 1954).

18 Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 109–110.

19 B.R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India, 1860–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 191–92.

20 A review of pre-independence nationalist thought on India's agricultural predicament is P.C. Joshi, "Pre-Independence Thinking on Agrarian Policy." *Economic and Political Weekly* 2, no. 8 (February 25, 1967): 447–56. On land reform in India, see Ronald J. Herring, *Land to the Tiller: The Political Economy of Agrarian Reform in South Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). An excellent provincial study is Walter C. Neale, *Economic Change in Rural India: Land Tenure and Reform in Uttar Pradesh, 1800–1955* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962). The classic journalistic account is Kusum Nair, *Blossoms in the Dust: The Human Element in Indian Development* (London: G. Duckworth, 1961). D.A. Low situates Indian land reform efforts in the context of a global turn toward the same in D.A. Low, *The Egalitarian Moment: Asia and Africa, 1950–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

21 See, for example, the early analysis of Z.A. Ahmad, *The Agrarian Problem in India: A General Survey* (Allahabad: K.M. Ashraf on behalf of the Political and Economic Information Department of the All-India Congress Committee, 1936).

22 Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Paris: Mouton, 1963).

23 On the Bihar Kisan Sabha, see D.N., "Swami Sahjanand and the Kisan Sabha." *Economic and Political Weekly* 24, no. 13 (April 1, 1989): 661–62; Lata Singh, "The Bihar Kisan Sabha Movement: 1933–1939." *Social Scientist* 20, no. 5/6 (May 1, 1992): 21–33. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati's stirring manifesto for the kisan and the agricultural laborer was published in the early 1940s as *Khet Mazdoor*, and outlines the aims of the struggle for peasant rights; see Sahajanand Saraswati, *Sahajanand on Agricultural Labour and the Rural Poor: An Edited Translation of Khet Mazdoor*, trans. Walter Hauser (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1994). A stirring Hindi condemnation of the Congress, urging the formation of a peasant farmer party, is Omkaranth, *Kisan shreni sajaga ho! [For the Peasants' Class Consciousness]* (Allahabad: Harṣadeva, Bhāratī Bhavana, 1934). Another much-circulated Hindi poem dramatized a peasant farmer's plight under *zamindar*i; Shad Malihabadi, *Sudharak traikt [A Tract of Improvement]* (Lucknow: Rama Shankar, 1939). In 1947, Sahajanand Saraswati brought out a short account of the Kisan movement in India as Sahajanand Saraswati, *Kisan Sabha Ke Samsara [The World of the Kisan Sabha]* (Allahabad: New Literature, 1947).

24 The AIKS supported the Congress in the struggle for independence, but lobbied for it to sever ties with the large landholders bankrolling the mainstream leadership. See Francine R. Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947–2004: The Gradual Revolution* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 55; M. Abdullah Rasul, *A History of the All India Kisan Sabha* (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1974).

25 Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India, 1860–1970*, 186–88. A classic account of the experience in Bengal is Sugata Bose, *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure, and Politics, 1919–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). For Tamilnad, see Christopher John Baker, *An Indian Rural Economy, 1880–1955: The Tamilnad Countryside* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). More generally, see Dietmar Rothermund, *India in the Great Depression, 1929–1939* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1992). On the relationship between Congress and kisans, see also Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885–1947* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 2012), 363–65.

26 The elected Congress ministries in the United Provinces and Andhra Pradesh produced plans to abolish *zamindari* during their tenure in office in the 1930s, yet their leaving those ministries in September 1939 put these plans in cold storage.

27 E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *With the Ploughshare and the Sickle: Kisan Sabha in the Campaign for More Food* (Bombay: Sharaf Athar Ali for the People's Publishing House, 1943).

28 One early academic formulation advanced an "originalist" interpretation of British intent in Permanent Settlement, urging that "section 39 of Pitt's India Act of 1784, brought into force all over India, abolishing Zemindars, and Government Estates in the peasants' lands, to save Agriculture in India, and protect the peasantry from chronic famine, and victimization by usurers, for time without end." Dvijadas Datta, *Landlordism in India*, Taraporevala's Indian Economic Series (Bombay: Taraporevala, 1931), 138. See also Dvijadas Datta, *Peasant-Proprietorship in India* (Comilla: The Author, 1924). Congress, in these critiques, was occasionally condemned by peasant leaders as a party of landlords, even as they increasingly adopted the language of

the *kisan* movements. See, for example, Omkaranth, *Kisan shreni sajaga ho! [For the Peasants' Class Consciousness]*.

29 *Hundred and Thirty Six Years under Zamindaries: Being the Report of the A.P.C.C. Regarding the Conditions of Zamin Ryots with Concrete Proposals* (Masulipatam: Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, 1938), 9–10.

30 Malcolm Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur; or: The Old Light and the New in the Punjab Village* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930).

31 Lalan Prasad Sinha, *The Left-Wing in India, 1919–47* (Muzaffarpur: New Publishers, 1965), 303.

32 Zoya Hassan, "Congress in Aligarh District, 1930–1946: Problems of Political Mobilization," in *Congress and Indian Nationalism: The Pre-Independence Phase*, eds. Richard Sisson and Stanley A. Wolpert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 336. See Paliwal's later publication, in Hindi, Krishna Dutt Paliwal, *Kisan Raj [Peasants' Rule]* (Agra: Ramprasad and Sons Prakashan, 1945).

33 On Singh, see Terence Byres, "Charan Singh, 1902–1987: An Appreciation." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 15, no. 2 (1988): 139–89; Paul R. Brass, *An Indian Political Life: Charan Singh and Congress Politics, 1937 to 1961* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2011).

34 Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Rise of the Other Backward Classes in the Hindi Belt." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 1 (February 1, 2000): 91.

35 Charan Singh, *Abolition of Zamindari, Two Alternatives* (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1947), iv.

36 M. Naidu, "The Bombay Plan," *Workers' International News* 5, no. 7 (December 1944): 1–4.

37 Quoted in Andrew Sartori, *Liberalism in Empire: An Alternative History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014). Texts like these, Sartori notes, suggest "that liberal norms were embraced in Bengali agrarian society on a footing that goes beyond instrumental and strategic modes of discursive engagement with colonial law or the colonial state."

38 Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, *Dharti Ke Lal [Children of the Earth]* (Indian Progressive Theatre Association Pictures, 1946).

39 Bhabani Bhattacharya, *So Many Hungers!* (London: V. Gollancz, 1947), 30–32.

40 Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, *I Am Not an Island: An Experiment in Autobiography* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977), 90.

41 Sumit Sarkar, ed., "Bombay Provincial TUC Resolution on the Food Situation," in *Towards Freedom: Documents on the Movement for Independence in India, 1946* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2007), 880–81.

42 H.D. Malaviya, *Land Reforms in India* (New Delhi: Economic & Political Research Department, All India Congress Committee, 1955), 16–17.

43 Ibid., 71–72.

44 The central debate over gift-giving (dān) in Indian contexts begins with Marcel Mauss (1954) and has manifest in new literature on philanthropy and altruism. See Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000); Jonathan Parry, "The Gift, the Indian Gift and the 'Indian Gift.'" *Man* 21, no. 3 (1986): 453–73; Jacob Copeman, "The Gift and Its Forms of Life in Contemporary India," *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 5 (2011): 1051–94; Erica Bornstein, *Disquieting Gifts: Humanitarianism in New Delhi* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012); Diana L. Eck, "The Religious Gift: Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Perspectives on Dana." *Social Research* 80, no. 2 (2013): 359–79.

45 Nasir Ahmad Khan, *Land, Landlord and Legislation* (Lucknow: Universal Publishers, 1947), ii–iii.

46 M.S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes: An Account of the Rehabilitation of Refugees from West Pakistan in Rural Areas of East Punjab* (Chandigarh: Public Relations Department, Punjab, 1954), 97.
47 *Report of the United Provinces Zamindari Abolition Committee* (Allahabad: Printed by M.G. Shome, Superintendent, Printing and Stationery, U.P., 1948).
48 Peshotan Nasserwanji Driver, *Problems of Zamindari and Land Tenure Reconstruction in India* (Bombay: New Book Company, 1949).
49 *Report of the Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee*, 2nd edn. (New Delhi: All-India Congress Committee, 1951). The Committee was asked to consider "co-operative farming and methods of improving agricultural production, position of small holdings, sub-tenants, landless laborers and generally [the improvement of] conditions of agricultural rural population"; meeting over the course of the next year and a half, the Committee traveled to villages across India, and called as witnesses theorists and practitioners alike.
50 Frankel, *India's Political Economy*, 68–70.
51 Ved Prakash Sharma, "Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee—A Critique." *Economic Weekly* (January 7, 1950): 9–11.
52 Shankarrao Deo, ed., *Our Immediate Programme* (New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1950), 30.
53 *Report of the United Provinces Zamindari Abolition Committee*, 609–10.
54 Quoted in Karuna Moy Mukerji, *Land Reforms: A Brief but Comprehensive and Critical Survey of Land Tenure Systems and Agrarian Reforms in India & Pakistan in Particular and in a Dozen Other Countries of the World in General* (Calcutta: H. Chatterjee & Co., 1952), 76.
55 On the "magic" of development, see Fernando Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Michael T. Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*, 2nd edn. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
56 Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1968); see also Benjamin Siegel, "Asian Drama Revisited." *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 8, no. 1 (March 17, 2017): 195–205.
57 Communist Party of India, "The Catastrophic Food Situation and Our Tasks: People's Solution and Demand of the People [P.B. Circular (New Series) No. I, to All Party Units]," August 10, 1950, 1950.91, P.C. Joshi Archives on Contemporary History.
58 J.F. Stirling, "The Background to Famine," *Eastern World* V, no. 12 (December 1951): 14–16.
59 Malaviya, *Land Reforms in India*, 46.
60 Mukerji, *Land Reforms: A Brief but Comprehensive and Critical Survey of Land Tenure Systems and Agrarian Reforms in India & Pakistan in Particular and in a Dozen Other Countries of the World in General*, 73.
61 Krishan Chander, *Khet Jab Jage [When the Fields Awake]* (Bombay: Bombay Book House, 1954), 1–3. I have only been able to find the Hindi translation of the Urdu original. The oppression of farmers was a constant theme in Chander's work—his story *Annadata*, "giver of grain," which farmers called "landlords," was the source of K.A. Abbas's *Dharti ke Lal*.
62 Daniel Thorner and Alice Thorner, *Land and Labour in India* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), 8–9.
63 Krishna Gopal, *Towards a Better Society*, 1953.

12

"Help the Plan—Help Yourself": Making Indians Plan-Conscious

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An anonymous contribution to *The Economic Weekly* (today's *Economic and Political Weekly*) from 1956 captures what the Five-Year Plans might have signified to contemporary Indians:

> If one were asked what the most common obsession of the common man in the sixth year of the Republic is, the answer would be: planning. Planning takes him away from the realities of the present situation; it gives him a sense of importance of being associated in some mysterious way with great undertakings, of being an estimable part of a burgeoning whole; and more than all, it provides food for compensatory reverie and scope for indulging in impressive facts and figures and mouthing learned phrases and abstruse theories … Planning has a touch of magic about it, and an element of weird ritual too; and what can appeal more to the average Indian mind than magic and ritual?[1]

During the formative decades of the republic, planning was an idea that governed India. Planning was not only the vehicle chosen for rapid economic transformation after nearly two centuries of colonial rule; it also became the language through which governmental aspirations for democratic state building were expressed. Planning became a staple of national conversation, and the Five-Year Plans effectively marked an alternate national calendar. Politicians seldom tired of invoking these Plans, the news media dutifully reported on their progress, they were debated in civil society, and the ordinary citizen found herself constantly assailed by calls to work ever more energetically toward the Plan's success. As a satirical piece in the *New York Times* noted, foreign visitors to the country would see that "India is very plan-minded."[2]

While the Soviet Union's *Gosplan* and their Five-Year Plans were no doubt an important influence, the Indian planning project self-consciously marked its distance and forged its own path. Constitutionally committed to representative politics and universal adult franchise, India sought to negotiate a unique marriage between parliamentary democracy and centralized economic planning. It was an experiment whose timing drew global attention. This was, after all, precisely when the Cold War

framed Western liberal democracy and the Soviet planned economy as fundamentally incompatible, both in terms of institutional arrangement and political values. Indeed, during the Cold War, India's distinctive combination of parliament and planning served as the domestic reflection of Nehru's foreign policy of resolute nonalignment with either bloc.

The popular and persistent image of the Planning Commission has been that of aging upper crust men, dressed in Congress *khadi* and *topis* or tailored suits, discussing dams and steel plants in the boardrooms of Lutyen's Delhi. Writing in that vein, Partha Chatterjee has argued that national planning was designed as "a domain outside of the 'squabbles and conflicts of politics'" to enable the legitimation of electorally unpalatable measures.[3] While this image might reflect how the Planning Commission functioned in large measure, it nevertheless overdraws the separation between the realms of Plan and public, failing to capture the extent to which the Indian government reached out to and engaged citizens in the planning project—going so far as to portray planning as democratic—and the lengths to which it went to make Plans popular.

Planning in India has usually been understood, and written about, as a technocratic enterprise exclusively concerned with the economy.[4] But India's Five-Year Plans were more than simply a means of regulating the economy. By shifting our gaze to an overlooked terrain in the history of Indian planning, this chapter presents a very different portrait. Looking beyond the economy, planning was also conceived of as an expansive political project that sought to appeal to every citizen and influence the nature of Indian democracy and society in the aftermath of colonial rule and the Second World War. As Sumit Sarkar observed, Nehruvian developmentalism "also had important cultural dimensions: discourses of modernity, scientific rationality and a high value set on a basically bureaucratic-statist thrust operating alongside with democratic and populist-socialistic impulses."[5] Unearthing this facet of the history of planning—in which it spilled out of boardrooms and into the realm of the popular—yields a deeper understanding of the role it was designed to, but never quite successfully played, in Nehruvian India.

This chapter examines the ways in which Indians would have heard of Five-Year Plans, and why they might have heard of it at all. It reveals the medium and idioms through which a resident of Chandigarh or a villager in Tamil Nadu, for example, would have encountered what the Planning Commission pronounced from its lofty perch in Lutyen's New Delhi. By studying how the government of independent India advertised the Plans and sought to deliver on the oft-repeated refrain of "democratic planning," this chapter argues that, its economic instrumentality apart, planning also had political ambitions. It was the pedagogical state tutoring its inhabitants on plan-consciousness, plan-participation, and productivity as self-help and national duty. To the government of independent India, the discourse of planning was a lever of postcolonial nationalism.[6] More specifically, it offered a means of instructing its citizenry on the correct terms of civic participation.[7] Its purpose was to build a postcolonial society of informed and productive citizens who would enthusiastically throw their weight behind the nation's Five-Year Plans—rather than simply being

ignorant participants in it. In doing so, this new nation-state was also defining in its terms what Indian citizenship meant.

What were the government's motivations behind these attempts to popularize the Plan and foment "plan-consciousness" (as it was often referred to)? To begin with, people had to know about the Five-Year Plans in order to labor toward their fulfillment. Due to the limitations of state capacity in early independent India, the Plans' success depended not only on citizens working toward the plan priorities, but also saving, spending, and investing in accordance with it (see Fig 12.1).[8] A people's consent had to be engineered. As the Congress Planning Sub-Committee noted,

> A climate has to be created so that every citizen of India becomes conscious of the role which he is expected to play, and make his due contribution to accelerating the pace of development … the deficiencies in values, effort, awareness and spirit of dedication … If they're allowed to persist, planning will not succeed, and at any rate its democratic basis cannot last.[9]

Furthermore, it was an article of faith for Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and several others in the Planning Commission and Congress Party. Educating Indians about the Five-Year Plans—their purpose, shape, and the citizen's role in them—was an end unto itself, for it was important that they knew about the nation's undertakings. It was the necessary minimum of democratic planning, and of the vaunted "Third Way" about which the Indian government lost no opportunity to lecture a Cold War-divided world.

Finally, there was what was referred to as the "psychological aspect": it was in the government's interest that the populace bought into the epic narrative it was selling. The government invited citizens to partake of the developmentalist state's narrative, presenting them with a sweeping story whose arc explained where they were (as citizens constitutive of a nation), how it came to be (overcoming the shackles of British rule), and the direction in which they were headed (industrial and egalitarian modernity). It was a way for Indians to make sense of their material situation, visualize their relationship to each other and the state, and plot themselves into the saga of Indian development.

Let us pause to note that while the phrase "democratic planning" was bandied about in official pronouncements, little was done to actually democratize it, that is, enable citizens to influence actual decision-making. Democratic planning was less a reflection on the process of planning than about the political dispensation under which Plans were formulated. Clearly, it was never the government's intention to allow policymaking to be plebiscitary. Instead, it was an invitation to participate in development projects, without questioning its terms. Rather than extending a vote on the Planning Commission to ordinary Indians, the slogan of "democratic planning" signaled the salience of the Indian experiment (of Plans passed in a parliament) and the government's desire to make people plan-conscious. To a substantial degree, then, "democratic planning" was simply plan-publicity, and plan-publicity merely propaganda. Nonetheless, the aims, content, and form of this propaganda invite inspection.

The calls to make Plans popular and people plan-conscious drew legitimacy and force from the highest official echelon. In 1951, during an extempore speech delivered one late spring morning to participants of the Economic Planning Conference in New Delhi, Nehru explained why it mattered so much. A few days ago, he began, as he was clambering up and down the Damodar Valley hydroelectric site, he had encountered a few engineers at work. Impressed by these engineers, he asked if they had explained the significance of the Damodar Valley Project to the workers laboring under their direction. Met with sheepish evasion, Nehru walked over to the workers, motioned them to gather, and asked, "What are you doing?" Puzzled and probably nervous, they responded that they were digging earth. The prime minister pressed on; "What does this lead to"? Receiving answers that were vague, and realizing that they were thrown by this line of questioning, he launched into an explanation. Though their individual roles might be small, he pointed out, they were contributing to an engineering marvel that would bring prosperity to the countryside, offer employment to hundreds of thousands, and prevent disastrous floods. To Nehru, it was vital that they understood and felt the magnitude of which they were but a speck.

In December 1952, in his last fortnightly letter to chief ministers for the year, he beseeched them to take the Plan to the people—believing that knowledge of, and involvement in the Plans would cement national cohesion. The Five-Year Plans

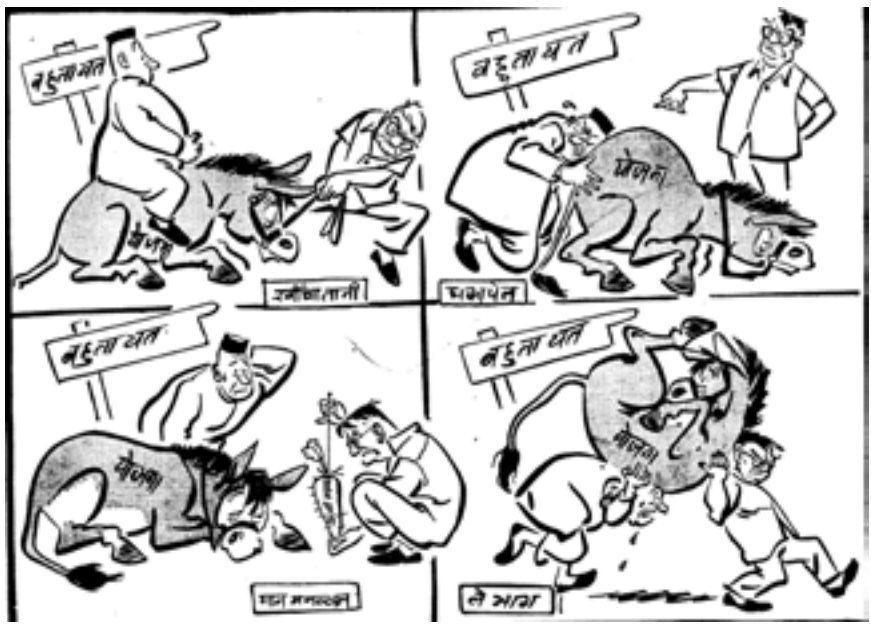

Figure 12.1 The Plan is an obstinate ass that won't budge in the direction of prosperity. Unmoved by pulling, pushing, and not tempted by the carrot of foreign aid, it makes progress only when people run with it on their backs. *Yojana* (Hindi), Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1957, p. 5.

embodied an India whose different geographies and sectors were all interrelated; they were based on a "conception of India's unity and of a mighty co-operative effort of all people of India."

The methods deployed by government to popularize Five-Year Plans were numerous. Organizationally, the Planning Commission's own Public Co-operation Division and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's Plan Publicity Section were the apex. The means available to them included (1) publishing and circulating *Yojana* (the Plan), a magazine issued in multiple languages carrying news reports and profiles of workers and farmers, and interspersed with the occasional exhortatory poem; (2) cooperating with the Films Division of India in Bombay to ensure a steady stream of documentaries and promotional films to be screened mandatorily at movie theaters and exhibited at various other venues across the country; (3) distributing community radio sets in order to ensure that villagers were exposed to the edificatory broadcasts by All India Radio on national affairs, the country's development agenda, and practical advice on farming and community action; (4) hiring and deploying musical and drama troupes across the country to perform songs and plays that echoed the message of the Plan; (5) coordinating the activities of the University and College Planning Forums, and (6) channeling voluntary organizations such as the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* (BSS; Service to India Society) toward advertising the Plan. In the interest of brevity, this chapter will limit itself to discussing only the latter three.

Bridging plan and people

On January 31, 1950, addressing Parliament for the first time in the new republic, President Rajendra Prasad announced the government's intention to establish a Planning Commission. He reminded parliamentarians that planning "can only succeed with the full cooperation of the people. It is only when Governmental agencies and popular enthusiasm and cooperation are yoked together that large scale economic and social development can take place."[10] Two years later, when the First Five-Year Plan was published, it included a chapter titled, "Public Co-operation in National Development." Its opening section—Democratic Planning—began with the acknowledgment that "Public co-operation and public opinion constitute the principal force and sanction behind planning" and hence there was a need to "enlist their enthusiastic participation." It was realized that a "widespread understanding of the Plan is an essential stage in its fulfillment" because it would enable each individual to "relate his or her role to the larger purposes of the nation as a whole." The Plan called for the press, writers, artists, universities, professional associations, elected representatives, and public servants to join hands and use all means available to them— "the written and the spoken word no less than through radio, film, song and drama"—in carrying the Plan "into every home in the language and symbols of the people and expressed in terms of their common needs and problems."[11]

August 1952 saw the founding of the National Advisory Council for Public Co-Operation, chaired by the prime minister. Representing different sections of opinion in the nation, its purpose was to find "ways and means to dovetail governmental

activity and public cooperation into one organized effort."[12] More specifically, the Council's role was to vet public-cooperation proposals, report on their progress to the Planning Commission, and make recommendations to the Central Board of the newly formed voluntary organization, the BSS. The following August, an Integrated Publicity Programme for the First Five-Year Plan was drawn up and discussed at the Ministry of Finance. At a meeting chaired by the deputy finance minister, it was decided that the Integrated Publicity Programme would be run by a Plan Publicity section that had been created within the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.[13] Headquartered in New Delhi, this section oversaw a nationwide network of publicity units that pushed the Planning Commission's message through films, radio, posters, advertisements, hoardings, exhibitions, cinema slides, mobile vans, songs, and drama. In its operations, India was divided into seven zones: North-West (headquartered in Delhi), Northern (Allahabad), Eastern (Burdwan), Southern (Coimbatore), Central (Hyderabad), Mid-West (Indore), and West (Baroda). Each of these functioned under a Regional Officer complemented by five or more field officers, whose job it was to travel through the districts with their own field units. Regional officers were expected to be "on tour" for twelve days a month, and field officers were prescribed twenty days of travel.[14] By 1956, at the end of the First Five-Year Plan, there were thirty-seven such itinerant field units in operation across the country.[15]

Depending on the terrain the field officer had to cover, they were either assigned a van unit, a boat unit, or a bullock cart unit. The bullock cart units were meant for those parts of the country where either there weren't paved roads or regions that were otherwise rendered unfit for motorized traffic during the monsoon. (See Fig 12.2)

Figure 12.2 Field publicity bullock cart—Central Region, 1956. Photo Number 55614, Photo Division of India.

And the boat units would ply coastal towns and villages on riverbanks. Whether on land or water, each unit was equipped with a film projector, a public address system, a power generator, and a tape recorder. The Films Division of India furnished them with 16 mm films such as *Working for the Plan*, *Tomorrow Is Ours*, *Industrial India*, *The Good Citizen*, and *Dreams of Mauji Ram* in the appropriate Indian language. From the Publications Division came pamphlets, leaflets, and posters that exhorted onlookers to "Help the Plan-Help Yourself," "Buy Handloom," and "Invest in National Savings," and instructed them on "Five Year Plan Projects" and "Family Planning."[16] The field officers toured their publicity beat—by dirt path, road, or river—covering as much ground as possible, delivering lectures, screening films, and distributing or displaying publicity materials.[17] During *melas* (fairs), a separate Exhibition Division chipped in by setting up Five-Year Plan stalls.

It wasn't easy for Plan Publicity handlers in New Delhi to keep track of what the roving field publicity officers were up to. Given the size of the country, the state of communications, and the number of languages across which the message had stay consistent, it wasn't surprising that the field publicity officers could often spend long periods without effective oversight. That they had to send daily reports on their activities to the regional officer was no guarantee of supervision: after all, the regional officer was himself expected to be traveling for half the month. Sometimes, the message packaged in Delhi lost shape or simply lost its way by the time it reached the villages. As an irate official at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Delhi dryly noted, "I have found that one of the officers in his daily reports is still talking about the National Plan Loan which was wound up about three years ago."[18]

Song and drama

Nestled within the Plan Publicity section of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was the Song and Drama Division. Instituted with the belief that in a traditional and overwhelmingly illiterate society culturally embedded forms of communication were the most appealing, the Song and Drama Division began by subsidizing stage performances of private musical and dramatic troupes (See Fig. 12.3).[19] The formats they supported included a wide range—Kavi Sammelans, Mushaira, Jatra, Ras, Tamasha, Bhawai, Nautanki, Maach, Dodatta, and Kathaprasangam.[20] The Division paid them to perform pieces that conveyed national development goals and plan achievements, and they ensured artistes stayed on message by distributing scripts for plays, skits, and songs that were collated at the ministry or borrowed from All India Radio programs.[21] Approved scripts were made available, in different languages, to the regional and field offices from where they were sent to the registered artistes in their districts. Once in the field, these scripts gained further circulation if they were used in performances by independent private troupes that had not been contracted.[22]

In April 1955, the Division decided that in order to maintain high standards in the productions that were going to be associated with the government's message, it would begin a list of approved troupes instead of offering grants on an ad hoc basis.

In order to get on this roster, troupes either had to apply or be recommended by one of the regional officers or field publicity officers. And in order to stay on the list, the troupe had to agree upon a program of performances with the regional officer. Every time there was a new sponsored performance, the skit or musical would have to be performed in front of a functionary of the Song and Drama Division, in order to assess the quality of production. Once accepted, no major change could be made in the cast, nor would the Division pay for expenses relating to rehearsals.[23] In 1956, the Song and Drama Division began sponsoring an annual Summer Drama Festival in select states. During these, all registered troupes in the state would gather at the capital or in a large town on the occasion of a popular *mela* to showcase their wares.[24]

The Bir Budhalwa Dramatic Troupe was one of the troupes chosen by the government to represent its message. Comprised of "mainly ex-criminals" from a village named Bir Budhalwa, it was organized by the block development officer of Nilokheri (then in Punjab; now in Haryana). It was through this officer's efforts that it came to be registered on August 8, 1955, and as the review of their application observed, "What is important in this case is that all actors belong to an ex-criminal tribe & their publicizing the plan on our behalf is in itself of publicity value."[25] They gave their first performance on the tenth of December that year, at a Solar Eclipse Fair in Kurukshetra, and in the following three years, they staged plays such as *Hamara*

Figure 12.3 The ballet "Indra puja," depicting the Five-Year Plan, presented by The Bhartiya Lok Sabha Kala Mandal of Udaipur. New Delhi, December 3, 1956. Photo Number 55879, Photo Division of India.

Gaon, *Maan Bhang*, and *Mangoo* in the districts of Karnal, Ambala, and Sirmur. Some members of the troupe even performed on All India Radio, and together they played for visiting dignitaries, including the "Holy Lamas from Tibet."[26]

By the end of 1958, the number of troupes on the rolls of the Song and Drama Division had shot up to 283. Due to the ballooning numbers, there was now "only occasional work with the result that the troupes did not take sufficient interest to improve their standard of production." What was worse, "some of them were even disloyal to the cause and took liberty with approved scripts."[27] It was decided, as a result, that their numbers would have to be dramatically reduced, paring it down to only four or five to a state. The fifty-five that made it to this shortened list included troupes such as the New Poornanada Dramatic Theatres (Mushirabad, Andhra Pradesh), Gauhati Silpi Sangha (Gauhati, Assam), Jan Natya Parishad (Basukinath, Bihar), Satyamoorthy Kala Manram (Madurai, Madras State), Kerala Cine Co-Operative Society Ltd. (Alwaye, Kerala), and Lok Kalakar Sangh (Almora, Uttar Pradesh). Those that were dropped received a brief letter from the director of the Song and Drama division regretting the cancellation of registration, but adding:

> I … convey our sincere thanks for your co-operation in creating the Plan-consciousness among the masses through the medium of drama. I do hope that as missionaries-cum-artists you will continue to do the same work on your own and spread the message "HELP THE PLAN—HELP YOURSELF."

Planning Forums

While the Song and Drama Division addressed the Indian population at large (if anything, they were partial to lesser-educated rural audiences), another experiment honed in on the educated urban minority—the country's future intelligentsia. When the draft outline of the First Five-Year Plan was drawn up, the Planning Commission requested university vice chancellors to ensure the circulation and discussion of its documents, ostensibly with a view to solicit ideas and suggestions before the Plan was made final. With the First Five-Year Plan drawing to a close, S. N. Mishra (the deputy minister for planning) decided that it was time to involve the university community in a more sustained dialogue with planners. As he was to write later, in the pages of *Yojana*, it was regrettable that even a "considerable section of our educated men and women still seem to think that the Plan is largely the responsibility of the Government."[28] This deplorable complacency, he continued, was possibly the result of the First Five-Year Plan's success. The lack of plan-consciousness in the country was the result of neither politicians nor the intelligentsia explaining the problems of democratic planning to the populace.

Having sounded out both the prime minister and the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission (V. T. Krishnamachari) and receiving their nod, Mishra wrote to vice chancellors in August 1955 on behalf of the Planning Commission, inviting them to establish University and College Planning Forums. An attempt to generate a "much more intimate and continuing association of teachers and students with

planning," these bodies were envisioned as the nuclei of informed discussion, debate, and recommendations about the Five-Year Plans.[29] The primary purpose of these voluntary associations was to discuss problems relating to planning and "bring to bear the latent capacity of teachers and students on their solution."[30] Furthermore, these forums were envisaged as not simply deliberative bodies but also organizations that took initiative in developmental activities themselves. Assuring them that there would be "two-way traffic" between the Planning Commission and the forums, Mishra promised the "closest consideration of any worthwhile idea that emerged" from the latter.[31] Beginning with 72 in April 1956, the planning forums numbered 190 in 1957, 300 at the end of 1958, and approximately 1,000 (out of 2,684 colleges and universities) in 1967.[32]

The First All-India Conference of the Representatives of the Planning Forums began in New Delhi on the morning of April 14, 1956, to discuss the draft outline of the Second Five-Year Plan. Apart from the 125 delegates from twenty-five universities and seventy separate planning forums, the roster of dignitaries in attendance included, among others, the prime minister, the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, the finance minister, the minister for planning, and the secretary to the Planning Commission. During the inaugural speech, S. N. Mishra extolled the virtues of democratic planning and spoke of how students and teachers were uniquely capable of contributing toward it. In between speeches by a string of official heavyweights—Nehru, C. D. Deshmukh, Gulzarilal Nanda (Planning Minister), and J. J. Anjaria (chief economic advisor, Government of India)—the delegates got down to the business of discussing the Second Five-Year Plan. After wide-ranging conversations on unemployment and deficit financing among other themes, the delegates made their way to Rashtrapati Bhavan, where President Rajendra Prasad granted them audience.[33]

In the months that followed, University Planning Forums began acquiring a bureaucracy. Following closely on the heels of the establishment of a Central Executive Committee, State Executive Committees sprouted in nine states, and regional conferences were set up. Over the next two years, these bodies clarified the tasks expected of college and university forums. Apart from intellectual engagement with the Plans within campuses—seminars, symposia, debates, and discussion—these forums were also presented with a more far-reaching agenda. Members of these forums were now expected to take neighboring high schools under their wing and talk to teenagers about planning. They were to help with the National Small Savings Scheme, participate in it personally, and convince others to help the Plan by saving through this official financial instrument. Each forum was also asked to "adopt" a village in their vicinity. In the forum's rural outposts, they were to instill plan-consciousness among villagers, conduct socioeconomic surveys (based on schedules sent to them by the Planning Commission) that would help in drawing up future plans, and help villagers implement and execute developmental programs.[34] The Madras Veterinary College Planning Forum, for instance, assisted five villages on the outskirts of the city, introducing them to better methods of poultry keeping, dairy farming, farm planning, and marketing. Staff and students, numbering 900, visited the villages in batches of fifty over three days in a week holding group discussions. This Planning Forum

even trained fifty "progressive farmers" in the management of large-scale livestock enterprises.[35] For National Plan Day (celebrated annually on September 13 from 1957) and National Plan Week (beginning with the Third Five-Year Plan), planning forums were offered grants by the Planning Commission to organize celebrations that included exhibitions, posters, film screenings, debates, elocution contests, dramas, and "kavi sammelan or mushaira on Plan subjects."[36] In addition, if planning forums really wanted to distinguish themself, they could organize a Plan Information Centre, an adult literacy center, or a night shelter for children. They could also run a small library of the planning literature made available to them, in which they could display charts, diagrams, and tables depicting the progress of plans in India and elsewhere in the world.

A report on the 1962 National Plan Week celebrations by the Planning Forum at Government Post-Graduate Basic Training College in Dharamsala (in the lower Himalayas) gives us an idea of their activities. Between November 13 and 19, a series of lectures were delivered by members of the Planning Forum to other students on the phases of planning, the progress achieved in different fields, on small saving schemes, the welfare of Harijans, and the importance of executing Plan schemes. On the final day, the forum collected charts and pamphlets on the Five-Year Plan from the local district public relations officer to display and distribute them among students. In order to make sure their message was heard further afield, the Forum organized a trip to the village of Bagli, eight miles from Dharamsala. With the help of the *sarpanch* (village headman) and the school headmaster, they banded together an audience of villagers and students at the local Higher Secondary School. The Forum lectured on the subjects of village uplift, agricultural development, small savings, the role panchayats could play in village reconstruction, and development in Kangra district. The trip to Bagli was soon followed by another, this time to the village of Bandi. In Bandi, apart from speaking at the primary school on similar subjects, the Planning Forum members also helped the students and teachers of the school in cleaning the school grounds and the surroundings of the village.[37]

The Plan's volunteers

Apart from promoting the Plan using the machinery of state, the government also encouraged voluntary organizations to do so. The BSS grew out of a proposal in the draft outline of the First Five-Year Plan, in which it was referred to as the *Bharat Seva Sangh* (India Service Association).[38] Its primary backer was the then deputy chairman of the Planning Commission (and subsequently minister for planning, irrigation, and power) Gulzarilal Nanda. He believed that "Planning in a democratic State is a social process in which, in some part, every citizen should have the opportunity to participate." All citizens, regardless of their station, had "something to offer in this Yagna [lit. Hindu religious offering]."[39] In April 1952, the Planning Commission released a pamphlet introducing the Samaj, and a couple of months later Nehru reiterated its relationship to planning, when he wrote to chief ministers that it had been "fathered by the Planning Commission."[40]

The Samaj's constitution was drafted by Gulzarilal Nanda and registered on December 17, 1952.[41] Despite being self-avowedly "non official and non political," the Samaj opportunely named Nehru its president, Nanda its vice president, and received substantial funding from the Planning Commission's Public Cooperation Division. The BSS was, as its pamphlet described, "the people's sector of the plan."[42] Its constitution opened with a description of its purpose:

> Bharat Sevak Samaj is the National Development Agency sponsored by the Planning Commission, Government of India to ensure public co-operation for implementing government plans. The main purpose behind the formulation of Bharat Sevak Samaj is to initiate a nation wide, non official and non political organization with the object of enabling individual citizens to contribute, in the form of an organized co-operative effort, to the implementation of the National Development Plan.[43]

The Samaj's logo—a tautly muscled man in loincloth, hands aloft, ready to strike with a pickaxe—reflected its emphasis on action and constructive work. While inaugurating different branches of the Samaj across the country, Nehru invoked Gandhi's emphasis on work and linked it to the present need to create an "atmosphere of work" in the nation. Speaking at a BSS function in Madras, he laid stress on the simple constructive acts through which members of the Samaj could serve their nation: "attending to sanitation, cleaning a village or street, road-making, digging canals, water channels, building a village council house, a school building, a small dispensary, or even a dwelling house."[44] By the beginning of the Second Five-Year Plan, that is, within four years, the Samaj had approximately 50,000 members and had opened branches in about 250 out of the 328 districts in the country.[45]

One of the Samaj's biggest successes was the wave of volunteers it channeled toward the Kosi project between 1955 and 1959. The Kosi, a river that descended from Tibet into Bihar, had for years wreaked havoc when it flooded the plains through which it flowed. Inspiring people to build embankments along the river through offering *shramdaan* (a donation of labor), the Samaj and other voluntary organizations generated such public enthusiasm that the embankment scheme was completed two years ahead of the timeline, at significantly reduced cost.[46] The overwhelming response at Kosi led to the Samaj pursuing similar work in other parts of the country—for example, on the Jamuna Bund in Delhi, the Nagarjuna Sagar in Hyderabad State, the Mahanadi Delta in Orissa, and the Chambal Project in Rajasthan.

In order to direct the developmental activities of the Samaj toward the most pressing issues, numerous *Lok Karya Kshetras* (People's Work Zones) were established in 1958 in order to "create social consciousness, develop local leadership and secure people's participation in the various development programmes in rural areas."[47] Focused on the successful implementation of the government's community development programs, Lok Karya Kshetras worked like this: each *kshetra* (zone) was assigned two or three BSS workers who were paid through government grants

to act as "catalytic agents." Trained centrally by the BSS in Delhi for three months the BSS *sahyogies* (helpers) were all expected to foster local leadership in the villages that they worked with and build a band of voluntary workers. While each *kshetra* was supposed to comprise of around a hundred villages, the BSS *sahyogies* began by working with ten villages, gradually scaling upward.[48] The activities in which they were engaged reflected the goals of community development—increasing food production; promoting health, sanitation, and education; strengthening panchayats and community centers; encouraging maternity health and child welfare; construction works; and even *sadachar nirman* (character building). By 1966, there were 184 *kshetras* that were entirely funded by the central government, and 207 *kshetras* that were funded by the central and state governments together.[49] In states across the country, the Samaj also played a role in wells and tanks dug, roads laid, schools, and dispensaries constructed (See Fig. 12.4).

Within the BSS, mass contact and publicity was the responsibility of the *Jan Jagran Vibhag* (People's Awakening Department).[50] Its objective was to popularize the country's Five-Year Plans and elicit public support for it. It was through Jan Jagran that the BSS began receiving grants from the government in 1953–54. Through it, the

Figure 12.4 *Bharat Sewak Samaj* trainees going to the project site to build an approach road near Badarpur (a village a near Delhi), in December 1955. Photo Number 49959, Photo Division of India.

Samaj circulated brochures and its own monthly journal, *Bharat Sewak*, in several languages. It also spread its message through "cultural programmes (songs, dramas, mushairas, concerts, bhajan mandalies, etc.) and through the popular agencies of Minstrels."[51] The nodes of this endeavor were the *Jan Sahyog Kendras* (Public Co-operation Centres)—of which there were twelve, nationally, in 1956—and the foot soldiers were the hundreds of *pracharaks* (messengers) who volunteered. In order to make the best use of them, the most effective *pracharaks* were even selected for, and received training at, a two-month training camp.

The Samaj also spawned three loose affiliates. The *Bharat Yuvak Samaj* (lit. India Youth Society) was for "ideological remoulding of the youth, for building up a Socialistic Pattern of Society" and to "mobilise the Youth for the various tasks of National Development and Social Reconstruction." The BSS—*Mahila Vibhag* (Women's Wing) was meant to "mobilise the Shaktis or energies of women (See Fig 12.5)."[52] The *Bharat Sadhu Samaj* (lit. India Ascetics Society) resulted from a public meeting on February 19, 1956, between G. L. Nanda and approximately fifty holy men who wished to contribute to the country's Plans. The *New York Times* reported on this in an article titled *India's Holy Men Get Worldly Job*. "The idea," it reported, was to have the "country's hundreds of thousands of sadhus—holy men who wander and preach all over India—put in a good word wherever they go for the goals of the five year plan."[53] Though it isn't clear whether the proposal germinated in government or among the sadhus, the seriousness it was accorded is apparent from the presence

Figure 12.5 Women social workers of the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* trainees camp at Badarpur explaining "how to follow clean and sanitary ways." December 1955. Photo Number 49960, Photo Division of India.

of Gulzarilal Nanda, the then Union Minister for Planning, Power, and Irrigation. The official interest in recruiting sadhus was predicated on the belief that—unlike distant government functionaries and deracinated town-bred volunteers—these holy men, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, could communicate the Plans to the illiterate and god-fearing millions in idioms they were familiar with and receptive to. The secular logic of developmental plans and economic growth was to be dressed in spiritual robes and disseminated through a religious vehicle, by men and women who embodied material renunciation.

In his speech at the meeting, Nanda spoke of the influence sadhus wielded, exhorting them to use this toward creating a popular sentiment in favor of Second Five-Year Plan goals. Nanda recommended that the sadhus organize themselves into a formal society; a printed resolution calling for the creation of a *Bharat Sadhu Samaj* appeared ready at hand and was duly adopted. It decried India's drift toward materialism under colonialism and urged the country's holy men and women to "help a free government and a free people."[54] Sant Tukodji Maharaj, the spiritual leader presiding over the conference, implored those in attendance to blend their devotional practices with practical work toward national development. Their task, he said, was to take the message of work to their vast following.[55] Two months later, 500 of the "country's leading Holy Men" gathered at Rishikesh—a holy site for Hindus on the banks of the Ganga—on the auspicious occasion of the Ardh Kumbh Mela to convene the *Bharat Sadhu Samaj*. Reporting from Rishikesh, the *Washington Post* observed that "India's shaven-headed, saffron-robed Sadhus (Holy Men) are to help preach the virtues of the five-year plan to the people …They have decided to leave the isolated retreats where they lead lives of renunciation and meditation to support national development." Those pledging their support to the plans included "Sadhus from the south, semi-naked saints from Himalayan caves, ash smeared wandering mendicants with their begging bowls and the heads of famous hermitages in the Himalayas."[56]

The *Bharat Sadhu Samaj* aimed to bring together sadhus of all sects in order to effect a "cultural re-orientation" within the country, improving moral and social standards in their "own inimitable and effective way," and ultimately helping in the "promotion of National Development Programmes."[57] The program they adopted, in service of the Plans, involved promoting education, imparting spiritual training through prayer meetings and cultural gatherings, preventing diseases through yogic exercises and ayurveda, encouraging voluntary gifts of land, wealth, and labor (respectively, *bhoodan*, *sampattidan*, *shramdan*), establishing training camps for sadhus, collective prayers, promoting prohibition, preventing corruption, caring for cattle, and encouraging village industries.[58] On June 25, 1956, the president of the *Bharat Sadhu Samaj* told the press that the organization had launched a "mass awakening programme" for the success of the Five-Year Plan.[59] That December, they convened an All-India Sadhu Sammelan in Nathdwara (Rajasthan). Predictably, this *sammelan* (gathering) of a thousand holy men and women was also inaugurated by G. L. Nanda. Prime Minister Nehru's message of goodwill stated that he was "glad the Bharat Sadhu Samaj had taken up national reconstruction work. In this way much assistance could be given for the success of the Five Year Plan."[60]

Just as with the *Bharat Sadhu Samaj*, in the course of the BSS's *jan jagran* (people's awakening) activities, planning would come to be associated with contexts and people who could not have been further from the secular high-modernist technocracy it was in New Delhi.[61] Among the more flagrant examples of this were the *vyas sammelans* (lit. gatherings of Hindu monks). As the case of the *vyas sammelans* will show, sometimes the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting undertook methods of publicity that promoted planning, but in forms that muddled its secular claims and likely raised the hackles of some members of the Planning Commission.

The first such assembly of holy men and women was in Allahabad in early January 1960 on the occasion of the Ardh Kumbh Mela.[62] Organized by the Samaj from 1960 onward, these meetings received funds from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Later that year, in early December, there was another three-day *vyas sammelan* in Pawai (near Bombay). Inaugurated by Jaisukhlal Hathi, deputy union minister for power and irrigation, it was a venue to discuss "ways and means of creating greater consciousness among the people in the rural areas about the various welfare schemes and the Third Five Year Plan." Despite both these meetings being failures, the Samaj convinced the government to fund a third *vyas sammelan*, this time coinciding with the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar between March and April 1962. In their appeal to the government, the BSS pointed out that the Kumbh Mela was expected to attract as many as 2.5 million people, presenting a ripe opportunity for Plan publicity. They added:

> The hold of religious preachers on the minds of the masses is still strong and on this occasion particularly most of the people visiting Hardwar will be spending most of their time in hearing religious discourses, Pravachans [discourses] etc. The importance of utilizing Vyases to arouse among the people a feeling of self-consciousness and self-reliance has been accepted by the Planning Commission in unequivocal terms … The holding of a Sammelan and Training Camp would, therefore, serve the purpose of not only bringing in a good number of Vyases under the fold of the Bharat Sewak Samaj and utilize them for Plan publicity work but would also enable us to do some real and effective publicity.[63]

The Samaj was granted funds for a *vyas sammelan* and the "Training of 100 Vyases," on the condition that it was coordinated with the local field publicity office and that it be "effective from the point of view of Plan publicity."[64] While 100 *vyases* did not turn up, 63 of them did undergo training at the camp (though an outside observer estimated it at only between 30 and 35).[65] These vyases—"Katha and Kirtankars" (storytellers and devotional singers)—were men and women hailing from Hindi-speaking parts of the country. Sant Panchlegaonkar Maharaj of Khamgaon opened the training camp on March 17 at four in the afternoon. After two minutes of silence and prayer songs, the trainees had the purpose of the camp impressed upon them. Panchlegaonkar Maharaj informed them that as the custodians of India's cultural heritage they could be of invaluable help in the promotion of development activities and plan publicity. Beginning the next day, their routine involved waking up at 5 a.m. and following through on activities that

included prayer, yogasanas, flag hoisting, *shramdan* (a donation of labor), studying, *kirtan*s (religious songs), and *kathas* (religious stories). Their syllabus (approved by the ministry) included lectures on subjects such as, for example, "3rd Five Year Plan and upliftment of the country through them" and "Responsibilities of Vyases and their programme for National development activities." Less topically, they were also lectured on "Faith and devotion for Motherland in Vedic Age" and "The concept of Hindu religion is based on universal laws."[66]

The Third All India *Vyas Sammelan* was kicked off on April 13, 1962, by Gulzarilal Nanda—the union minister for planning and labor and member of the Planning Commission—with a speech in which he hoped that the *vyases* would "effectively contribute their might for the glory of our National Development." The session was also attended by Mahamandaleshwara Swami Shukdevananda Maharaj of Hrishikesh and "many other saints and learned scholars of high repute" such as Swami Shantananda Maharaj and Swami Bhajnanda Maharaj. Groups of kathavachaks also offered daily discourses on religious epics such as the *Ramayan*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Durga Saptsati* at the Samaj's *pandal* (stall) at the Kumbh mela. All of this was capped of with a *Vishnu Yajna* (sacrificial ritual for Lord Vishnu) in which the Union Minister Gulzarilal Nanda partook. In fact, there were so many religious personages at the event that the government's Field Publicity Section borrowed three sadhus to perform at their camp at the Kumbh Mela for nine days. The regional officer's only stipulation to these holy men was that their version of the *Ramayan* (a Hindu epic) should "highlight the achievements of the Plans etc. for the welfare of people who were so dear to Bhagwan [God] Ram."[67]

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out some of the methods by which the government of independent India popularized its Five-Year Plans and invited mass participation—through officially sponsored musical and dramatic troupes, university planning forums, and volunteer groups such as the *Bharat Sewak Samaj*. As an inquiry into the state's discourse and the official narrative woven around planning, it studies intent and action rather than reception and achievement. And while these methods may not have been successful in achieving the lofty goal of making India entirely "plan-conscious" (in fact, the evidence indicates overwhelming failure), their inability to do so should not obscure the significance of what it represented. Planning in India was distinguished by its operating in a democracy. And this was no ornamental detail—it was a fundamental feature of the Indian state, and a principle that the Nehruvian government was committed to and voluble about. To this government, the braiding of Parliament and Plans, at a time when the Cold War presented them as mutually exclusive, symbolized the distinctive path the Indian republic had chosen to tread and the example it offered to other poor, decolonizing nations. In such a context, it wouldn't do for planning to be of concern only to the technocrats in Yojana Bhawan. For "democratic planning" not to ring entirely hollow, Indians had to be made plan-conscious at least, if not plan-participants. It was important to the government—

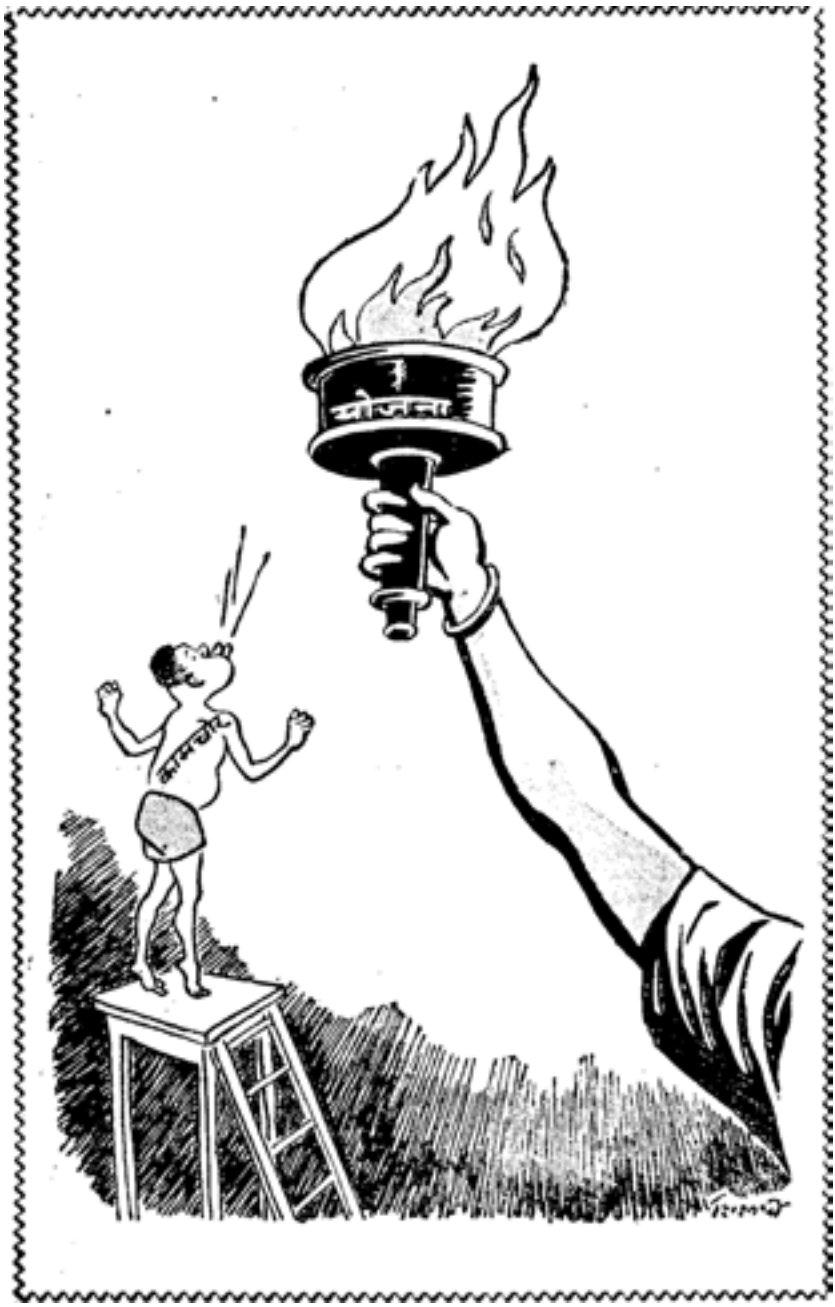

Figure 12.6 A tiny balding man, branded "slacker," stands on his toes atop a ladder and tries to blow out the lamp of the Plan. The cartoon simultaneously conveys how the Five-Year Plans are threatened by public apathy and, conversely, that it is nourished by mass participation. *Yojana* (Hindi), Vol. I, No. 19, October 6, 1957, p. 1.

or at least significant sections within it—that its citizenry be aware of what Five-Year Plans were, and their place in it. The government knew that Plans could never be drafted through plebiscite, but it could be implemented with an informed and willing populace. This was based on the idea that citizens fully achieved citizenship only when they were aware of the national narrative and their role in it. It was then that citizenship passed from formality to substance. More instrumentally, the Planning Commission was aware that even the most expertly crafted Plan was only likely to succeed if the people, who ultimately had to implement them, championed it (See Fig. 12.6). Planning in India, then, was marked by a theoretical commitment to educate the ordinary Indian about it, and by the compulsion to create a productive citizenry. Informed, involved, and productive—this, according to the government, was what citizens should have been in the India of Five-Year Plans.

Notes

1 City Clerk, "The Common Man and the Plan," *The Economic Weekly*, January 1956, 75.
2 Vidura, "Outside-Inside India: An Indian View," *New York Times*, May 1, 1960, 26. This article was reproduced in the *New York Times* after original publication in *Shankar's Weekly*.
3 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 202.
4 See Medha Kudaisya, "'A Mighty Adventure': Institutionalising the Idea of Planning in India." *Modern Asian Studies*, 43, no. 4 (July 2009): 960–65; Partha Chatterjee, 'Development Planning and the Indian State,' in *The State and Development Planning in India*, ed. T.J. Byres (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Vivek Chibber, *Locked In Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Nikhil Menon, "'Fancy Calculating Machine': Computers and Economic Planning in Independent India," *Modern Asian Studies* (Forthcoming, 2017).
5 Sumit Sarkar, "Nationalism and Poverty: Discourses of Development and Culture in 20th Century India." Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29, Issue 3 (2008): 432.
6 For a discussion of "postcolonial nationalism" in India across different sites (such as state-sponsored documentaries, Republic Day parades, and steel towns), see Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Peter Sutoris' recent study of the Films Division's output also indicates that the documentary was "a tool for legitimizing the development regime." Peter Sutoris, *Visions of Development: Films Division of India and the Imagination of Progress, 1948–75* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 132.
7 For a discussion of Nehru's redefinition of what politics should consist of in the postcolony, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, "'In the Name of Politics': Democracy and the Power of the Multitude in India." Public Culture vol. 19, no. 1 (2006): 35–57.
8 Discussing the food crisis the early independent nation found itself embroiled in, Taylor C. Sherman and Benjamin Siegel have similarly argued that India's constrained state resources and capability led to calls for popular action and participation. Taylor C. Sherman, "From 'Grow More Food' to 'Miss a Meal': Hunger, Development and the Limits of Post-Colonial Nationalism in India, 1947–1957." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 36, no. 4 (2013): 571–88; Benjamin Siegel, "Self-Help Which

Ennobles a Nation': Development, Citizenship, and the Obligations of Easting in India's Austerity Years." *Modern Asian Studies*, 50, no. 3 (May 2016): 975–1018.

9 *Report of the Congress Planning Sub-Committee* (All India Congress Committee, 1959), 12.

10 "Revised Procedure for Selection of troupes and allotment of performers," in F. No. 20(1)/59, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, National Archives of India, New Delhi (henceforth NAI).

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12 S. Gopal, ed., *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (Second Series),* Vol. 19 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1996), 89.

13 "Directorate of Field Publicity-Creation Of," F. No. 12(3)/59-PP, p. 11, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

14 F. No. 12(5)/59-PP, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

15 "Terms of Members of Planning Commission," F. No. PC (A)/3/50, Planning Commission, NAI.

16 F. No. 4/53/57-FYPPII, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

17 "Directorate of Field Publicity-Creation Of," F. No. 12(3)/59-PP, p. 12, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

18 "Directorate of Field Publicity-Creation Of," F. No. 12(3)/59-PP, p. 1, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

19 "Song and Drama Division-Selection of Troupes," F. No. 20(1)/59, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

20 Ibid.

21 "Study Team-Information and Community Centre," F. No. 16(12)/59-PP, Vol. I, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

22 "Song and Drama Division-Selection of Troupes," F. No. 20(1)/59, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

23 Ibid.

24 "Song and Drama Division-Selection of Troupes," F. No. 20(1)/59, Plan Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 S. N. Mishra, "What Students Can Do for the Plan: The Role of Planning Forums." *Yojana*, I, no. 19 (October 6, 1957): 3.

29 Government of India (Planning Commission), *University Planning Forums: Summary Record of Meetings, April 1956–September 1957* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1957), 2.

30 S. N. Mishra, "What Students Can Do," 3.

31 Government of India (Planning Commission), *University Planning Forums: Summary Record of Meetings, April 1956–September 1957* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1957), 2.

32 Government of India (Planning Commission), *University Planning Forums: A Review* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Dec. 1958), 2; Asoka Mehta, *Towards a Better Planning Forum* (New Delhi: Central Institute of Research and Training in Public Cooperation, 1967), 1.

33 Government of India (Planning Commission), *University Planning Forums: A Review,* Plan Forum (New Delhi: Publications Division, Dec. 1958), 2–3.
34 Ibid. 2–6.
35 "Current Topics." *Times of India,* February 3, 1967, 8.
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41 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of the Bharat Sevak Samaj, 1969*, reproduced in G. L. Nanda Papers, Acc. No. 2511, Reel 21, NAI.
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45 Bharat Sewak Samaj, *Bharat Sewak Samaj: What It Represents, What It Does* (New Delhi: Publications Department, undated).
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48 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of the Bharat Sevak Samaj, 1969*, reproduced in G. L. Nanda Papers, Acc. No. 2511, Reel 21, NAI.
49 *Evaluation Report on Lok Karya Kshetras [Public Co-operation Centres]*, Programme Evaluation Organisation, Planning Commission, P.E.O. Publication No. 54, Government of India, New Delhi, October 1967.
50 The *Jan Jagran Vibhag* began receiving funds from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 1953. While at first the government covered all the *Jan Jagran Vibhag*'s costs, it was later reduced to 82.5 percent of the total expenditure. "Grant-in-Aid to Bharat Sewak Samaj," F. No. 1/19/62-PP, Policy Planning, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.
51 Bharat Sewak Samaj, *Bharat Sewak Samaj: What It Represents, What It Does* (New Delhi: Publications Department, undated).
52 Ibid.
53 A.M. Rosenthal, "India's Holy Men Get Worldly Job." *New York Times*, February 19, 1956, p. 13.
54 Ibid.

55 "500,000 Sadhus to Help Build Up New Nation." *Times of India*, February 19, 1956, p. 9.
56 V. M. Nair, "Indian Sadhus, Holy Men to Help Sell 5-Year Plans." *Washington Post*, June 19, 1956, p. 46.
57 Bharat Sewak Samaj, *Bharat Sewak Samaj*.
58 V. M. Nair, "Indian Sadhus, Holy Men to Help Sell 5-Year Plans." *Washington Post*, June 19, 1956, p. 46.
59 "Mass Awakening Programme," *Times of India*, June 26, 1956, p. 7.
60 "Creating Atmosphere Free of Social Evils," *Times of India*, December 18, 1956, p. 11.
61 A detail that speaks volumes of the *Bharat Sadhu Samaj*'s (and by association the *Bharat Sewak Samaj*'s) enmeshing of social and religious service is that Sant Tukadoji Maharaj was one of the founder vice presidents of the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP), a far-right body committed to consolidate the Hindu society, to serve and protect it. For more on Sant Tukadoji Maharaj, see Anna Christine Schultz, "Translated Fronts: Songs of Socialist Cosmopolitanism in Cold War India." *History and Anthropology* 28, no. 1 (2017).
62 F. No. 1(34)/62-PP, Vol. I, Plan Publicity, 1962, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.
63 F. No. 1/64/61-PP, Policy Planning, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.
64 The amount they spent in total was Rs. 16,694.81. "Bharat Sewak Samaj-Plan Publicity Programme," F. No. 1(64)/61-PP, Policy Planning, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NAI.
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66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.

13

The Past and Future of the Muslim Postcolonial Moment: Islamic Economy and Social Justice in South Asia

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The catastrophic violence that engulfed Europe during the First World War, the double-blow to Western capitalism precipitated by the rise of the Soviet Union and the Great Depression, and the growth of anticolonial nationalism all contributed to a fundamental reworking of colonial-metropolitan relations.[1] With the political and moral authority of Europe in flux, intellectuals and activists in Asia sought alternative models of governance and economic organization. Participating in these trends, Indian Muslims argued that Islam provided a broad vision of social justice that offered solutions to the ills plaguing Western societies. Rejecting colonial attempts to limit the influence of religion to private and "communal" concerns, they argued that Islamic forms of social organization could benefit both Muslims and humanity, more generally.

This chapter explores these larger shifts by focusing on burgeoning academic interest in Islamic economics and mounting popular demands for Islamic social justice in late-colonial India and early-postcolonial Pakistan. The broad scope of the material covered reflects the porous boundaries between scholarly and popular writings during the period, since academic writings on Islamic economy were broad in scope, and many scholars were involved in politics. The Urdu terminology writers used as rough translations for the English word "economy" encouraged Indian Muslims to treat economics, ethics, law, and politics as overlapping categories. While *iqtisad* and *ma'ashiyyat* have become synonymous with economy and economics in modern Urdu, their Arabic roots *aish*, life or subsistence, and *qasd*, aim or intent, convey broader meanings.[2] Yet, while the range of literature on Islamic economy and social justice was vast, it was united by a common interest in the interrelationship between material life, normative justice, and spiritual development.

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Seeing questions of politics and economy as intertwined, efforts to envision Islamic forms of social justice also sparked probing debates about the nature of the state and its relationship to human freedom. While recognizing the role of the state in reining in men's baser instincts, many early writings on Islamic economy viewed the ethical reform of individual behavior as a key locus of social change. Creating an Islamic economy rested as much on individuals living pious lives—including pursing a material calling—as on state institutions. It was an effort to envision a postcolonial nation in which an expanded culture of citizenship and civil society would replace the unitary and top-down sovereignty of the colonial state. Their emphasis on "bottom-up" processes of political and moral revolution contrasted sharply with the state-centered projects of Islamization that emerged in the latter decades of the twentieth century, suggesting a more multistranded genealogy of twentieth-century political Islam.[3]

Despite the richness of these writings, the figures that populate the coming pages have been often caught between the conventional boundaries of nation-based historiographies and area-studies geographies. Proponents of Islamic economy, who cultivated international networks and universalist aspirations, sit uncomfortably in conventional histories of late-colonial India that focus on the intertwined politics of nationalism and communalism.[4] Meanwhile studies of contemporary Islamic political and economic thought have focused disproportionately on the Middle East, neglecting all but the most canonical South Asian contributions. The South Asian genealogies of these movements provide hitherto neglected insights into the historical forces shaping their development. For example, the centrality of prohibitions on *riba* to Islamic economics and finance is generally simply taken as a given. In contrast, writings emerging out of South Asia in the 1930s and 1940s suggest that this focus was shaped as much by historical contingency, as by religious doctrine. Muslim concerns with alternative forms of credit were deeply intertwined with global debates about finance spurred by the Great Depression. They were also influenced by debates in India about agrarian debt, a major area of policy interventions in the early twentieth century.[5]

Timur Kuran, one of the few scholars to research these Indian writers, while crediting them with founding the discipline of Islamic economics, had dismissed their work as characterized by "incoherence, incompleteness, impracticality, and irrelevance."[6] This harsh evaluation imposes anachronistic, late-twentieth-century standards of economic research onto an earlier historical period. In the place of graphs and equations, these writings cited Quranic verses and classical Arabic *tafsir* (commentaries). Yet they also drew on Western classics, from the works of Aristotle to Adam Smith, and contemporary research on war debt and interest rates. Moreover, in fusing economic thought, moral philosophy, and politics, Muslims were hardly exceptional during the period, when the boundaries of economics as an academic field remained inchoate.[7] Kuran's further criticism of Islamic economics as driven by Muslim separatism and resistance to globalization simply does not fit the intellectual biographies of the figures that populate the coming pages.[8]

While rejecting criticism of Islamic economics as "communal," the chapter grapples with the gap between the influence of ideas of Islamic economy and the limited impact

of efforts to translate ideas into practice. In late-colonial India and early-postcolonial Pakistan, writings on Islamic economy fueled calls for new policies that would further Islamic social justice. With the creation of Pakistan, scholarly and popular literature placed the idea of Islamic social justice at the center of efforts to conceptualize the new nation as an Islamic democracy. During a nearly decadelong struggle to craft a new constitution, however, this vision of Islamic social justice receded into the background. Pakistan's first constitution exempted monetary and economic matters from its Islamic provisions, a striking retreat from the emphasis on social equality present in early visions of Pakistan's Islamic mission.

It is hard not to see this rapid retreat from any meaningful material effort to translate ideals of Islamic social justice into concrete initiatives as a bitter failure. Yet the sheer speed with which these ideas were marginalized necessitates moving outside evaluations of success and failure to conceptualize larger forces of historical conjuncture and disjuncture. Islamic economy was the brainchild of the interwar period, nourished off of its spirit of internationalism and experimentation, which spurred effort to find alternatives to dominant Western political and economic models. In contrast, throughout the subcontinent, but especially for Muslims on both sides of the Indo-Pak border, the moment of independence was characterized by crisis and a struggle for survival. In Pakistan, almost utopic optimism about the nation's experiment with Islamic democracy quickly deflated into strategic efforts to insure the security of its very existence.

For Muslims, the postcolonial experience might be thought of as doubly partitioned. On top of geographical division, the experiential timing of postcoloniality was also divided, as the almost infinite sense of possibility that animated postcolonial imaginaries proved jarringly out of sync with the constrained political realities of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Yet if writings on Islamic social justice proved of limited utility during the moment of independence, their ongoing relevance today suggests that the postcolonial moment might be recaptured through nonsynchronic notions of time. Today, as authoritarian nation-states, whether Islamic or secular, have lost their legitimacy across large parts of the Muslim world, the time is ripe for another wave of decolonization. The past and present may as yet meet in our own postcolonial moment, in which the alternative imaginary of interwar Islamic social justice could provide much-needed alternatives.

The Asian alternative: Islamic socialism

In the second decade of the twentieth century, growing anticolonial sentiments in India intersected with the international upheaval of the First World War and the Russian Revolution. During this decade of crisis, Indian Muslims participated in global currents of radical mobilization and produced a rich outpouring of writings on alternative forms of social organization. Surging interest in the relationship between Islam and socialism was one of the products of this period of political fervor and intellectual cross-fertilization. During the Khilafat Movement, Indian Muslims fleeing India in protest against Britain's role in dismantling the Ottoman Empire helped to

found the Communist Party of India in Tashkent in 1920. Some Muslims, deeply moved by the promise of the socialist experiment, in the words of one historian, "converted" from Islam to socialism. Others emphasized the congruence between Islam and socialism, arguing that the two, contrary to orthodox ideology, could be mutually reinforcing.[9] They rejected Marxist conceptions of religion as an opiate for the masses, insisting instead that Islam's commitment to spiritual equality could infuse socialism with spiritual depth.

These themes were embodied in the writings of Mushir Hosain Kidwai, a cosmopolitan intellectual whose writings on Islam and socialism would eventually circulate across both South and Southeast Asia.[10] Born in 1878 into a family of North Indian landowners, Kidwai traveled to London as a young man, where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. He spent over a decade and a half abroad, including visiting the Ottoman Empire, where he received an honorary appointment as a commander of the Osmanic Order from the Sultan. In London he served as the secretary of the Pan-Islamic Society. After returning to India in 1920, Kidwai became a Khilafat activist, a member of the United Provinces Legislative Assembly, and a vocal socialist. He authored a stream of books and pamphlets, including *The Philosophy of Love, Women in Islam*, and *The Future of the Muslim Empire-Turkey*. He also wrote a series of books on Islam and socialism, including *Islam & Socialism* (c.1912), *The Abolition of Personal Ownership of Property* (n.d.), and *Pan-Islamism and Bolshevism* (1937).[11] Mirroring Kidwai's own itinerant paths, his books also traveled widely, including through adaptations of his work by H.O.S. Cokroaminoto, a founding theorist of Islamic socialism, and mentor to Sukarno, Indonesia's first president.[12]

Kidwai argued that Islam, while sharing many of socialism's key values, rejected its exclusively secular orientation. Projecting contemporary debates into the deeper past, Kidwai argued that the Prophet and early generations of Muslims limited the corrosive effects of capitalism by prohibiting interest, collecting *zakat*, and giving basic rights to slaves.[13] Kidwai also emphasized Islam's democratic spirit, claiming that the Prophet had encouraged government by the people, which he referred to as a form of state socialism. In contrast, Kidwai argued that in the West democracy had evolved into a delegated form of governance, in which the intervening influences of political parties "create an unsocialistic spirit." He also praised the early Islamic state for avoiding the "bureaucratism" which plagued modern governments. He explained: "There were no departments, no portfolios. The Muslims leaders could not be as independent of public opinion as are the Cabinets and ministers of the present-day."[14]

In Kidwai's estimation, the distinctive qualities of early Islam had fostered socialist values organically, and from the bottom-up, as opposed to relying, as Europe had in the more recent past, on violent revolutions and state-imposed reforms. Moreover, Kidwai argued that because Europe had focused exclusively on the material dimensions of socialism, it had failed to achieve a truly socialist society. He argued that even if European revolutionaries succeeded in forcibly nationalizing land and capital, "they cannot better the condition of the people or advance the cause of Socialism so long as the people of the State do not improve morally." True socialism required the cultivation of ethical values, including respect for the "sovereign rights of individuals" and "sentiments of mutual harmony and brotherhood." The future

of socialism for Kidwai therefore lay not in Europe, but in Asia because it possessed the "great moral stamina and spiritual strength which Europe lacks."[15] Appealing to a common Asian identity, Kidwai insisted that Buddhists and Hindus would "be our best allies and associates in the sacred cause of advancing Socialism."[16]

Islamic economics: Between capitalism and communism

Among Indian Muslims, rising interest in socialism focused attention on the relationship between material inequality and the spiritual message of Islam. Building on these interests, a circle of colleagues at Osmania University in Hyderabad looked to forge a greater connection between the modern discipline of economics and Islamic theology. Their interest in the relationship between religion and economics was in tune with the *zeitgeist* of the day, reflecting the more fluid disciplinary boundaries and overtly normative concerns that were an accepted part of economic research in the early decades of the twentieth century. For example, between 1916, when it was founded, and independence, the *Indian Journal of Economics* carried articles with titles such as "The Religious Base in Indian Economy," "The Hindu Taxation System," and "Is Economics Non-Moral?".[17] Participating in these wider debates, researchers working at Osmania in the 1930s and 1940s turned to Islam as a source of alternative economic models. They argued that Islamic institutions, including the charitable redistribution of *zakat* and prohibitions on *riba* or interest, could help correct the problems of insufficient consumer demand and excessive debt which had contributed to the Great Depression. More generally, the scholars at Osmania described Islamic economics as offering a middle ground between capitalism and communism, an idea which would emerge as a dominant theme in subsequent writings on the topic.

While collaborating with scholars and intellectuals located within British India, academics in Hyderabad were among the most influential early proponents of Islamic economics. The geographical focus of the movement within Hyderabad echoed the princely state's broader role as an incubator for institutional models and ideologies which positioned Islam and Muslim culture as sources for non-European models of modernity. The sprawling princely state, which was ruled by the Nizams of the Asaf Jahi dynasty, operated at the intersection of regional political power and British colonial suzerainty. Simultaneously mindful of the need to prove its modernity and to assert its independence, the state fostered a variety of experiments in public education and urban infrastructure.[18]

Emerging as one of the key sites for these experiments, Osmania University was founded in 1918 as India's first university dedicated to providing modern education in the vernacular. During its early decades of existence, one of Osmania's core projects was the publication of Urdu translations and textbooks, which allowed students studying in vernacular languages to access the most up-to-date academic knowledge.[19] Works on economics, including both classics and new publications, were among the early works to be translated, including J. S. Mill's *Utilitarianism*, William Stanley Jevon's *Money and the Mechanism of Exchange*, and Romesh Dutt's *The Economic History*

of India.[20] The translation bureau also produced two economic textbooks in Urdu, *Usul-i-Ma'ashiyyat* (Principles of Economics) and *Ma'ishat-ul-Hind* (The Economy of India).[21] As Kavita Datla has argued, the translation of such texts positioned Urdu as a "secular" lingua franca that could foster dialogue across different religious and cultural traditions. At a broader level Osmania can be seen as attempting to secularize Islam itself by emphasizing its universal message and its relevance to modern social problems.[22]

In the 1930s and 1940s, rising interest in Islamic economics unfolded against the backdrop of these wider efforts. Among the key early participants were Dr. Anwar Iqbal Qureshi, the head of Osmania's economics department, Manazir Ahsan Gilani, the head of the theology department, and Muhammad Hamidullah, a professor of international law.[23] Qureshi, Gilani, and Hamidullah combined ties to Indian religious institutions with international academic connections. They collaborated with Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi, a Khilafat activist and the director of the Islamic research institute Dar-ul-Musannefin in Azamgarh. Himself the author of works on Islam and socialism, Nadvi wrote the introduction to Qureshi's book *Islam and The Theory of Interest* and published Gilani's research in *Marif*, the journal of the Dar-ul-Musannefin.[24] Links between scholars in Hyderabad also extended outside of India. The Egyptian scholar Sayyid Rashid Rida wrote his Arabic treatise *Riba wa al-muamalat fi al-Islam* (Riba and Commercial Dealings in Islam) as a response to a query from an unnamed scholar in Hyderabad in the late 1920s or early 1930s.[25] Mawdudi, who will be discussed in the next section, also worked at the Osmania translation bureau from 1931 to 1937.[26]

Hamidullah was the earliest of the Osmania intellectuals to publish on Islamic economics. While originally receiving a classical Islamic training with a focus on Quranic recitation, Hamidullah subsequently studied international law and participated in an exchange program organized by the League of Nations. He earned doctorates from Bonn and Paris Universities for his work on international law and Muslim diplomacy.[27] On returning to Hyderabad, Hamidullah published an article in 1936 in the journal *Islamic Culture*, entitled "Islam's Solution of the Basic Economic Problems."[28] The essay argued that modern economists had struggled to maximize private gains while ensuring social welfare. On the one hand, Hamidullah argued that under *laissez-faire* capitalism "poverty like a tragic spectre has haunted the ceaselessly toiling humanity in ironic contrast with the riches of the leisured few."[29] On the other hand, communism, by abolishing private enterprise was "bound to kill the incentive to production" and eliminated "the moral development which the exercise of personal choice in connection of private property makes possible."[30]

Faced with these opposing systems, and their respective flaws, Hamidullah offered up Islam as the ideal middle ground. *Zakat* would temper capitalist exploitation of workers by providing them with a guaranteed basic level of subsistence. Not only would this protect them from abject poverty, it would also empower them to strike to demand better wages since they would have access to basic subsistence while out of work. Similarly, Hamidullah argued that Islamic prohibitions on *riba* would prevent the violent boom-bust cycles to which free-market capitalism was prone. In order to link these Islamic concepts back to contemporary debates within economic

research, Hamidullah cited the work of the American economist Irving Fisher on debt deflation. While Fisher had shown that mounting debts forced businesses to reduce prices, increasing the real value of the original debts, and eventually leading to bankruptcies and bank failures, Hamidullah argued that Islam would prevent this vicious cycle. In place of conventional, interest-based financing, Islamic prohibitions on interest would ensure that investors had to share in the profits as well as loses of businesses, leading them to make more responsible investments.

Encouraged by Hamidullah's early efforts, his colleagues in the theology and economics departments quickly embarked on overlapping research projects. Manazir Ahsan Gilani, who shifted to Osmania after studying and teaching *hadith* at the famous *madrasa* at Deoband, was well known for his role in advocating greater interaction between religious institutions and modern universities.[31] The project of Islamic economics fit within these wider interests, and Gilani set out to write a major monograph in Urdu on the topic, entitled *Islami Ma'ashiyyat* (Islamic Economy). Bemoaning the extent to which Islamic scholars had ignored economic topics, Gilani claimed that his book was the first significant work on the topic in either Urdu or Arabic.[32] Gilani argued that the struggle for material prosperity was central to an Islamic conception of piety, describing economic struggle (*ma'ashi jid-o-jahd*) as a form of conducting *jihad* in the cause of Allah. In support of this argument, he cited the Surat Muzzammil, a passage of the Quran that describes the conditions under which Muslims should perform *tahajjud*, the supplemental voluntary nighttime prayer. A portion of the *sura* specified that these prayers should not become a burden because "He [God] knows that some of you will be sick, some of you traveling through the land seeking God's bounty, some of you fighting in God's way: recite as much as is easy for you."[33] Equating seeking God's bounty to economic endeavors, Gilani argued that Islam recognized efforts to secure material prosperity as a form of devotion to God.[34]

Connecting more abstract research to the immediate concerns facing Indian Muslims, Gilani also wrote about the permissibility of receiving interest payments on bank deposits. In an extended article published in *Marif* in 1945, he used Islamic jurisprudence on the legal difference between *dar-ul-Islam* (a territory under Muslim rule) and *dar-ul-harb* (a territory under non-Muslim rule) to argue that Indian Muslims were allowed to receive interest in their transactions with non-Muslims. Gilani emphasized that Islamic law provided for this exception to enable Muslims to adjust to the demands of life under non-Muslim rule and international exchange. Gilani reassured his readers that, "Islam, along with adopting means for the prohibition and elimination of interest, has also provided Muslims with means by which they will be protected from being gobbled up by different communities when they enter into the international struggles of the financial world."[35]

While Gilani contributed his sterling reputation as a scholar of Islam, a third colleague, Anwar Iqbal Qureshi, brought international recognition as an up-and-coming economic researcher to the project. Qureshi received an MA in economics from the University of London and a PhD from the University of Dublin. In the 1930s, he published comparative research on agricultural debt and state banking in India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States.[36] After becoming the head of the economics department at Osmania, he also advised the Nizam of Hyderabad on

economic policy and served as an officer in the Agricultural Credit Department of the State Bank of India.[37] He was a member of the editorial board of the *Indian Journal of Economics* and a regular contributor on topics ranging from cooperative financing to wartime food shortages. In debates about the role of the state in managing the economy, Qureshi's more *laissez-faire* predilections and criticism of excessive state management of the economy earned him the wrath of many of his more Left-leaning colleagues.[38] When he turned these interests toward the topic of Islamic economy, Qureshi, like Hamidullah, focused on the potential for Islamic prohibitions on *riba* to provide critical insight into contemporary debates about credit and economic instability. In his book *Islam and the Theory of Interest* (1946), he noted that researchers such as John Maynard Keynes had showed that excessive savings, by leading to hoarding of capital, hindered economic growth. Qureshi argued that if modern economies adopted an Islamic prohibition on interest, they would, by removing an artificial incentive to save, prevent this problem. It was only Keynes's Western biases, according to Qureshi, which prevented him from having "enough courage in his hands to condemn outright the charging of interest."[39]

Beyond their own work, Hamidullah, Gilani, and Qureshi also mentored students pursuing research on topics ranging from Islamic principles of partnership to indigenous and cooperative banking.[40] While these projects echoed broader nationalist currents of the period, the scholars at Osmania at times seemed disconnected from the local economic crisis unfolding in Hyderabad itself, which experienced widespread agrarian unrest in the 1940s.[41] Their writings on Islamic economy are notably silent on this subject, and despite Qureshi's own research on agrarian credit, he devoted surprisingly little attention to agrarian finance in his writings on Islam. It is ultimately impossible to know if the scholars at Osmania would have gradually linked their idealistic visions of Islamic economy to more pragmatic solutions to agrarian instability.

Effectively cutting short theses intellectual endeavors, India invaded and forcibly integrated Hyderabad into the new Indian nation-state in 1948. In the following years, Qureshi migrated to Pakistan, where he served as an economic advisor to the government, while Hamidullah was stranded in Paris after India cancelled his passport because of his protests against the occupation of Hyderabad. In the 1950s, he briefly served on a committee of Islamic scholars who provided guidance during the drafting of the first Pakistani constitution, but later resigned and returned to Paris. Hamidullah would later lament in an article on Hyderabad's contribution to Islamic economics: "All this has also suffered on account of the upheaval that has come about."[42]

Popularizing Islamic economy: Sayyid Abdul Ala Mawdudi

Cut short in Hyderabad itself, the ideas pioneered at Osmania gained a degree of longevity and popularity through the work of Sayyid Abdul Ala Mawdudi, albeit often in significantly altered form. A few years after leaving Hyderabad, Mawdudi founded the Jama'at-i-Islami in 1941, which would grow into one of the most significant

Islamic movements in South Asia. As a leading theorist of political Islam, Mawdudi influenced many of the twentieth century's most well-known Muslim political figures, including Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Ayatollah Khomeini.[43]

Scholarship on Mawdudi has downplayed the importance of his economic thought because during the postcolonial period the Jama'at-i-Islami favored conservative economic policies, opposing efforts by the Left to implement land reform and promote labor rights.[44] Mawdudi's writings on Islamic economics from the 1940s, however, evinced a more nuanced intellectual position than his later political activities. Many of Mawdudi's intellectual biographers have argued that in becoming enthralled with the state as an agent of social change, he neglected Islam's emphasis on individual ethics.[45] Yet his early writings on economics emphasized the individual as the key agent of moral transformation and saw the state as playing only a limited role in reforming Muslim society. An emphasis on individual freedom led Mawdudi to reject communism, which he denounced as an atheistic and draconian system that suppressed human initiative and creativity. Yet, he was also equally critical of free-market capitalism, which he described as allowing free reign to man's greed. While Mawdudi emerged as one of the most outspoken critics of socialism among his generation, he thus shared with many of his contemporaries a vision of an Islamic economy as a middle ground between capitalism and communism, which would balance the rights of individuals with the good of society.

Mawdudi delivered one of his earliest statements on Islamic economics in an address at Aligarh Muslim University in October 1942. In the early 1940s, when Mawdudi gave his speech, the Aligarh campus was teeming with socialist and anticolonial politics.[46] Feeding off this energy, in his address Mawdudi infused the academic subject of Islamic economics with a new populism. He opened by criticizing the discipline of economics, with its "magic of professional complications" and "rigmarole of terminology." He proposed instead to address the economic problem of man in its "plain and natural simplicity."[47] Economics, he told his audience, must be studied from an ethical and practical perspective, taking into account both the spiritual and material needs of mankind. The essential problem was to figure out "how should economic distribution be arranged so as to keep men supplied with the necessities of life and see that every individual in a society is provided with opportunities adequate to the development of his personality."[48]

Mawdudi's solution to this problem involved striking a balance between man's social and individualistic impulses. He argued that inequalities of wealth, which were rooted in men's different capacities, were natural. They should, however, not be allowed to reach an extent in which the rich tyrannized over the poor. He blamed current economic problems on the fact that "the natural selfishness of man" had been allowed to exceed "the limits of moderation."[49] Man's natural right to the products of his labor was not absolute. If man "finds himself possessing more of these means than his requirements justify, it only implies that a surplus which was really the portion of others reached him."[50] Those with excess wealth were therefore morally obligated to give the surplus to those in need. Yet, while evoking a socialist ethics, Mawdudi condemned communism for pursuing these goals by subjecting men to a centralized authority in which individual diversity was reduced to a

"soulless uniformity."[51] Mawdudi insisted: "What human personality needs above everything else for its evolution and advancement is that it should have freedom, it should have some means at its disposal which it may use in accordance with its own discretion and its own will and choice and in so doing develop its hidden potentialities."[52]

While the West had struggled to balance individual freedom and social good, Mawdudi explained that Islam, unlike capitalism or communism, was able to promote both because it emphasized the cultivation of man's moral nature rather than a top-down program of state control. Mawdudi allowed that Islam, while valuing economic freedom, introduced "certain restrictions on its actual practice so that it may not be misused and made a means of exploiting and oppressing the weaker sections of society." He insisted, however, that:

> … the authority and pressure of law and the coercive power of government should not be used except when it becomes inevitable to do so … Man should be free to strive for his livelihood, that he should retain the right of ownership over whatever he earns by his labour, and that disparity must exist between various men due to their varying abilities and circumstances.[53]

This strong emphasis in Mawdudi's early writings on balancing human freedom and external regulation stand in marked contrast to his later political activities in postcolonial Pakistan. In his later political career, Mawdudi supported the very centralized and top-down modes of governance that he had criticized in his earlier work on Islamic economy. Mawdudi was not alone in his retreat from earlier ideals. Lofty appeals to Islamic social justice often faltered when faced with the reality of diverging interpretations of Islam and competing material interests among Muslims, who spanned a wide range of class interests. While some degree of tension between political ideology and practice was inevitable, these tensions were particularly acute in South Asia in the 1940s and 1950s.[54] As the following sections will show, the politics of Partition and the creation of postcolonial Pakistan resulted in acute pressure to assert a unified Muslim identity. All too often this emphasis on unity foreclosed the possibility of exploring alternative ideological constructions that required subtle negotiations of differences and divergences between Muslims.

Pakistan: "Laboratory of Applied Islam"

Nurtured by the international networks and cosmopolitan imaginaries which flourished during the interwar period, Islamic economics evolved outside the narrow confines of explicitly nationalist projects.[55] Many of its most influential proponents, including Mawdudi, opposed the demand for a separate state and kept their distance from the Muslim League. The rapid realignment of Muslim politics in the 1940s, which culminated in the creation of Pakistan, brought ideas of Islamic economy and Muslim nationalism into a common orbit. Beginning with efforts in the mid-1940s by Muslim members of the Community Party to push the Muslim League to

endorse Left-leaning economic policies, discussions of Islamic economy and social justice came to play an increasingly influential role in the lead up to and immediate aftermath of Pakistan's creation.[56]

While not necessarily among its early advocates, many intellectuals interested in Islamic economy looked to the new Pakistani state as an opportunity to put their ideas into practice. Simultaneously, the popularization of some of these ideas under the broader umbrella of calls for Islamic social justice captured the attention of a wider public. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a flood of pamphlets, newspaper articles, and books appeared on the topic of Islamic economy. They expressed optimism that by incorporating Islamic concepts such as *zakat* and *riba*, the new state could escape the problems that plagued both capitalist and communist economies in the West. Their writings also looked to Islam as a source of human freedom, tying economic reform to broader questions of citizenship and sovereignty. Knitting together positive and negative conceptions of freedom, they advocated for forms of political economy that would protect individual rights and ensure social wellbeing.

Despite the brutal conditions that the new nation faced in the years following independence, many Pakistanis initially expressed optimistic, even utopian, enthusiasm about nation building. They believed that Pakistan could encourage political and economic innovations that would serve as an example for both the Muslim and non-Muslim world. The following discussion captures this early enthusiasm by examining the writings of Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, an academic-turned politician, Fareed S. Jafri, a journalist, and Mazheruddin Siddiqi, an independent scholar. The writings of these figures demonstrate how the pressing need to build a government from scratch and to define Pakistan's position in the emerging geopolitics of the Cold Warfostered rich debates about the relationship between religion, politics, and economy.

Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, a historian of medieval India and member of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly, authored *The Future Development of Islamic Polity* on the eve of independence in 1946. In the pamphlet, Qureshi expressed almost euphoric excitement about the project of "fashioning the future of Muslim society," invoking the common metaphor that Pakistan was a "laboratory" in which political theories would be tested against the crucible of human experience.[57] In particular he argued that if Pakistan was to develop into a true Islamic democracy, it would need to eliminate poverty as a source of human oppression. He explained, "Islam believes in the fullest growth of man; it gives him freedom to enable him to attain his fullest stature, but not to indulge in meaningless and destructive pleasure or wield an unhealthy influence upon society."[58] For Qureshi, this conception of human liberty made Islam incompatible with capitalism. Equating capitalism with tyranny, Qureshi argued: "Tyranny whether of power or of money cramps the human soul; hunger, poverty, starvation reduce the human being to the level of an animal. These demons cannot be allowed to exist in the world of Islam."[59] Qureshi believed that the route to eliminating these sources of economic oppression lay through what he termed, "State Capitalism," in which the government engaged in economic planning. He argued that Soviet Russia provided a model for combining rapid development with social justice, but rejected its doctrine of "materialistic dialectics" as contrary to Islam.[60]

In an address to the All-Pakistan Political Science Conference, held in Peshawar in 1951 and later published as a pamphlet in English and Urdu, Qureshi linked his economic views to broader arguments about the dispersed nature of sovereignty in an Islamic democracy.[61] He argued that the people of Pakistan should hold political sovereignty while the law of Islam should hold legal sovereignty. Real sovereignty, however, lay with "those innumerable forces which sway the life of a nation and direct its activities."[62] Qureshi emphasized that the critical question was how these different forms of sovereignty would interact. While emphasizing the legal sovereignty of the *sharia*, Qureshi argued that the existing body of Islamic jurisprudence needed to be reinterpreted. The legislature had to shoulder this responsibility because "as the supreme representative of the people, the legislature alone can speak for them and accept on their behalf what seems rational and proper out of the mass of argument and commentary putting forward different points of view."[63] Qureshi allowed the *ulama* a role in these discussions, but insisted that their views should not be accorded sacerdotal precedence. By differentiating between political, legal, and real sovereignty, Qureshi added depth to the concept of Islamic democracy, portraying sovereignty in terms of a dynamic relationship between Islam, the citizens of Pakistan, and the laws of the country.

Pakistan's vigorous press played a major role in debates about the role that Islam should play in the new nation. In 1951, Fareed S. Jafri, a former war correspondent and editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, wrote a short book entitled *The Spirit of Pakistan*.[64] If Jafri lacked Qureshi's nuance, he made up for it in stylistic flourish. The text of the book periodically burst into capitalized text, visually splashing his enthusiasm across the page. The book reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of what Jafri referred to as Western democracy, capitalist-controlled democracy, cooperative democracy, and communist democracy. Jafri exhorted his fellow Muslim to "accept all that is gold from these rich and productive mines for Islam encourages evolution." Yet he cautioned: "But at the same time, we must not forget that everything that glitters is not gold."[65] The text that followed presented an eclectic mix of references, from Abraham Lincoln and Oscar Wilde to Turkish scholarship on the founding of the Republic. Ultimately Jafri argued that Islam provided a model of "spiritual democracy" that was richer than any existing Western model.[66]

Books like Jafri's were directed at both the Pakistani public and wider international audiences as debates in Pakistan intersected with Cold War politics. In the early 1950s, Pakistani intellectuals began to attract international attention as the United States and Western Europe became interested in the role that the Muslim states might play as a counterweight against the rise of communism. While visiting England in 1953, Jafri lectured at the Royal Central Asian Society on communism and Islam. He argued that if the Muslim world returned to "basic Islamic democracy," which promoted economic equality, it would avoid the perils of communism. He insisted that if in 1946 the British and Americans had created a "Chinese Pakistan," the fifty million Muslims in China would have become a "great bulwark for democracy."[67]

Feeding off this global interest, Mazheruddin Siddiqi briefly became a hit on the international academic circuit in the 1950s after publishing a book denouncing the dangers of communism. Siddiqi became interested in Islam and socialism while

living in Hyderabad, where he wrote a book in Urdu comparing the philosophy of Marx and Hegel to Islam. While in the process of completing the book, he met Mawdudi, who mentored his research.[68] In another work, *Marxism or Islam?* Siddiqi argued that Marxism had been able to make serious inroads in the Muslim world only because Muslims had reduced Islam to "a happy memory of the past." Yet, he urged that Islam actually offered a better means of furthering the modern cause of social justice than Marxism, which relied too heavily on the power of the state—an argument that harkened back to both Kidwai's and Mawdudi's writings. Marxism, according to Siddiqi, "left an extremely narrow field of action for the exercise of free choice by men and women and for self-regulation which is the essence of morality." In contrast, he explained, Islam relied primarily on the moral development of individuals which ultimately led to the uplift of society more generally. The state, by ensuring peace and order, merely provided conducive conditions in which these processes could freely unfold.[69]

In 1953, Siddiqi attended the Harvard International Seminar, a program that Henry Kissinger organized to bring emerging international leaders to the United States. While the seminar's annual report specifically declared that its purpose was not to propagandize, the participants were taken on carefully curated tours emphasizing the prosperity and benevolence of the US economy, including stops at the Ford factory, the Council of Industrial Organization, and Goodwill Industries.[70] After the Harvard program, Siddiqi attended the Colloquium on Islamic Culture at Princeton, a conference funded by the state department's International Information Adminsitration.[71] Although Siddiqi wrote enthusiastically about his experience in the United States, his correspondence from the period suggests a creeping dissonance between his outlook and that of his hosts. In a letter he wrote after visiting Harvard, Siddiqi thanked Kissinger for his "extreme tolerance of my ideological aggressiveness." He assured Kissinger that although he might have mistaken Siddiqi for a "fanatic or proselytizer," he was actually "a believer in American democracy." Siddiqi concluded by informing Kissinger that he had recommended him as a speaker at the Colloquium on Islamic Culture at Princeton. In a jocular final sentence, he encouraged Kissinger to attend and assured him: "You need not fear being converted, I think you have sufficient grit."[72]

In the early years of its existence, Pakistan fostered rich debates about the relationship between Islam, democracy, and economic development. While "Islamization" is often associated with the development of an authoritarian state, many writers in Pakistan's early years saw excessive state power as incompatible with the development of an Islamic polity.[73] Instead, they attempted to balance individual and social needs by envisioning forms of sovereignty that would promote the free development of individuals' moral and economic capacities, while reigning in their excesses. Ultimately, however, calls for Islamic social justice and emphasis on balancing the power of individuals, state, and civil society quickly fell victim to shifting political realities. Under the pressure of entangled economic, political, and military crises, optimism gave way to anxiety, fueling the rise of an authoritarian state and enfeebling efforts to address poverty and inequality.

Marginalizing Islamic social justice in postcolonial Pakistan

In the first decade of Pakistan's existence, efforts to translate visions of Islamic polity into concrete political structures crystallized around the project of drafting a new constitution. Pakistan took almost a decade to draft its first constitution, a delay exacerbated by ongoing controversy about what role Islam should play in the new state.[74] Meanwhile, Pakistan reeled under the pressure of war with India, shortages of financial and infrastructural resources, the death of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and the breakdown of the Muslim League. In this environment, the new state's democratic institutions were overwhelmed by the rising ascendance of the military and civilian bureaucracy.[75] The Constituent Assembly became mired in intractable divisions over minority rights and the balance of power between Pakistan's eastern and western wings, while many questions about the relationship between the government and Islam remained unanswered.

The rapid marginalization of discussions about the best means of realizing the new nation's ideals of Islamic social justice mirrored these larger processes. Although featuring prominently in the early deliberations of the Constituent Assembly, by the mid-1950s they had virtually disappeared from official deliberations, epitomized most strikingly in the exemption of monetary matters from the so-called "repugnancy clause," which mandated that the laws of Pakistan conform to Islamic principles. More broadly, by cutting short efforts to translate ideals of Islamic social justice into concrete policies, Pakistan curtailed the robust debates about Islamic political theology that had flourished in the 1940s and early 1950s. In the place of sophisticated discussions of the relationship between individual ethics and state governance, and of the divided nature of sovereignty, Islamic politics in Pakistan increasingly became synonymous with the top-down imposition of Muslim unity.

During the early deliberations of the Constituent Assembly, there was still reason to be optimistic about the new state's commitment to translating ideals of Islamic social justice into creative new institutional forms and policies. The Objectives Resolution, which the Assembly passed in March 1949, recognized God as the ultimate source of sovereignty but committed the new state to working through the chosen representatives of the people. It resolved that the nation should observe "the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice, as enunciated by Islam."[76] In introducing the Objectives Resolution, Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first prime minister, placed the goal of reducing poverty and inequality at the heart of the new nation's positive and enabling conception of Islamic freedom. As the prime minister explained: "It is our intention to build up an economy on the basic principles of Islam which seeks a better distribution of wealth and the removal of want. Poverty and backwardness—all that stands in the way of the achievement of his fullest stature by man—must be eradicated from Pakistan."[77]

Yet, in subsequent years the Constituent Assembly devoted almost no attention to translating this theoretical commitment to Islamic social justice into a practical platform of economic reform. While at odds with the optimism that persisted into the late 1940s, this rapid retreat makes sense when placed within the broader context of developments in Pakistani politics in the 1950s.

During this period, the Left became increasingly rigidly secularist in its politics. Meanwhile prominent *ulama*, including Mawdudi, lashed out against socialists for

their atheism and failure to protect private property. The possibility of forging an alliance between the Left and religious leaders around the popular cause of Islamic social justice was therefore rapidly foreclosed. Meanwhile, the nascent Pakistani state came to view both the Left and the *ulama* as threats to its stability, after each was implicated in antigovernment conspiracies and protests.[78] Against this political backdrop, when the reconstituted Constituent Assembly finally ratified a constitution in 1956, the ambitious project of fostering Islamic social justice was largely reduced to symbolic assertions of the new nation's Islamic identity. The constitution included a so-called "repugnancy clause," which declared that no laws should be passed that contravened the Quran or *sunnah* and that all existing laws would be amended to conform to Islamic injunctions. The provision, however, excluded "fiscal and monetary measures, laws relating to banking, insurance, provident funds, loans and other matters affecting the existing economic, financial and credit system." The Constituent Assembly approved the clause with minimal discussion—wary that further debate would open up a Pandora's box of conflict and dissent.[79]

A few voices of protests remain preserved in the legislative record as reminders of the gap between the vision of Islamic social justice that originally animated visions of Pakistan's future and the rapid retreat to maintaining a status quo of poverty and inequality. As Abdul Kasem Khan of East Bengal exhorted the Assembly:

> We have preached from many platforms and the Press that we want to give the people Islamic sociology, which means certainly a better distribution of wealth in the country. But, have we made in the last six years any conscious effort to secure to our people the benefits of a better distribution of wealth in the country? Not to my knowledge … But I can tell you that the people will not be satisfied if we fail in securing for them the substances of Islam, the substance of freedom.[80]

As Abdul Kasem Khan foreshadowed, the demand to realize the promise of Islamic social justice through a penetrating program of economic reform retained popular appeal. In the 1970s, Pakistan's first elected prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, ran on a platform promising to promote Islamic socialism. In the 1980s, under the military government of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, the officially appointed Islamization Committee recommended an extensive program of economic reform covering income inequality, wealth tax, economic growth, universal education, social security, and antipoverty measures. Yet in practice, with the exception of largely symbolic efforts to establish an interest-free banking system and *zakat* distribution, Zia's program of Islamization focused on the punitive enforcement of a narrow code of Islamic morality.[81]

Conclusion

In postcolonial Pakistan, class and gender hierarchies inherited from the economic policies of the colonial government, rather than Islamic norms of social justice, have continued to dominate. At one level the difficulty of translating the ideals

of Islamic social justice into practical reforms was a simple story of political self-interest triumphing over ideological commitments. Yet understanding the rapid rise, and equally rapid marginalization, of these ideas requires more than an ahistorical narrative of the inevitable triumph of materialism over idealism.

If ideas of Islamic economy and social justice were nourished by the wider intellectual and material contexts of the interwar period, their quick political demise was equally shaped by the shifting contexts of the 1940s and 1950s. In South Asia, the experience of direct and indirect colonialism (as was the case in the princely state of Hyderabad) may have contributed to the de-emphasis on state-centric visions of political economy, one of the more striking features of early writings on the topic. Yet, as early as the 1940s, growing enthusiasm for large-scale, state-directed economic planning, as evinced in documents such as the Bombay Plan of 1944, increasingly dominated postcolonial imaginaries, even as figures such as Anwar Iqbal Qureshi provide an important reminder that this shift was not uncontested.

Even more dramatically, the Partition of the subcontinent bifurcated not just physical space, but also the infinite sense of possibility that animated many efforts to imagine the role that Islam might play in postcolonial futures. Unsurprisingly, there was little room for Islamic economy in postcolonial India, where any effort to bring Islam into the political domain was tantamount to sedition. Perhaps less intuitively, Pakistan also proved inhospitable to efforts to translate Islamic social justice into practical policies. With Pakistan's very existence threatened both from within and without, addressing poverty and inequality became distant priorities. Lacking either the geographic or linguistic unity of a conventional nation state, Pakistan could ill afford to sacrifice the rhetoric of Muslim unity to fissures, both spiritual and material, that would have accompanied efforts to map ideals of Islamic social justice onto concrete policies of redistribution and development. Thus, for proponents of Islamic social justice, imagined postcolonial futures proved out of sync with the actual moment of independence.

Largely discarded in their own time, what then is the point of resuscitating these past imaginaries? Is this simply an exercise in nostalgia? On the contrary, the very disjunctures of time and space that many Muslims experienced in 1947 caution against thinking about the postcolonial moment through bounded, linear historical time. Instead, the repeated resurfacing of demands for Islamic social justice in Pakistani politics suggests that elements of the postcolonial project have extended across decades. Today, interwar conceptions of Islamic economy, and in particular efforts to balance state power, individual freedom, and civil society, are ever-more resonant with our own twenty-first-century geopolitics. Across the Muslim world, authoritarian states and territorial nationalism seem to be the cause, rather than the solution, to mounting crises—from the persecution of Muslim and non-Muslim minorities, to the desperation of refugees caught between violence at home and sealed borders abroad. While the mid-century moment made it clear that nationalism and states are essential to gaining and maintaining independence, stepping back into the decades before independence provides a reminder that postcolonial ambitions traversed wider vistas.[82] With the promise of Islamic social justice still strikingly unfulfilled for many Muslim in South Asia and beyond, it is worth rethinking the

postcolonial moment across time and space, not as failed project, but as a still unfolding potential.

Notes

1 On the 1920s and 1930s as generative of radical efforts to reimagine the world order, see Manu Goswami, "Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms." *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 5 (December 2012): 1461–85. I am indebted to both Manu Goswami and Mrinalini Sinha for their comments on earlier versions of this chapter, and in particular their suggestion to think of Islamic social justice not as a failed, but rather "untimely," political project, which in the 1940s and 1950s proved out of sync with emerging political and economic trends.

2 Neither term appears in the most well-known Urdu-Hindi dictionary from the nineteenth century, John Platt's *Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English* (London: Crosby Lockwood and Son, 1899).

3 On the state-centered focus of Islamist politics, see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). For a more recent account of Islamists' growing interest in civil society, see Humeira Iqtidar, "Secularism beyond the State: The 'State' and the 'Market' in Islamist Imagination." *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 3 (2011): 535–64.

4 This lack of interest seems to be changing. Muhammad Qasim Zaman has recently written about how Deobandi *ulama* approached the topics of socioeconomic justice. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious Authority and Internal Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 221–60. Muslims' involvement in socialist movements is another area of growing interest: Khizar Humayun Ansari, *The Emergence of Socialist Thought among North Indian Muslims, 1917–1947* (Lahore: Book Traders, 1990); Kamran Asdar Ali, "Communists in a Muslim Land: Cultural Debates in Pakistan's Early Years." *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 3 (2011): 501–34; Neilesh Bose, "Muslim Modernism and Trans-Regional Consciousness in Bengal, 1911–1925: The Wide World of Samyabadi," *South Asia Research* 31, no. 3 (November 2011): 231–48.

5 Sugata Bose, ed., *Credit, Markets and the Agrarian Economy of Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

6 Timur Kuran, "The Discontents of Islamic Economic Morality," *The American Economic Review* 86, no. 2 (May 1996): 438. See also Timur Kuran, *Islam and Mammon: The Economic Predicaments of Islamism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

7 On the historically broad range of economic thought, see Emma Rothschild, "Political Economy," in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, eds. Gareth Stedman Jones and Gregory Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 748–79. On the rise of the modern discipline of economics, see Marion Fourcade, *Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, and France, 1890s to 1990s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

8 Timur Kuran, "The Genesis of Islamic Economics: A Chapter in the Politics of Muslim Identity." *Social Research* 64, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 301–38.

9 K.H. Ansari, "Pan-Islam and the Making of the Early Indian Muslim Socialists." *Modern Asian Studies* 20, no. 3 (January 1986): 528–29.

10 Obaidullah Sindhi was another well-known revolutionary and writer who, after an extended period of international exile stretching from the First World War to the late 1930s, turned toward exploring the synergies between Islam and socialism. Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age*, 223–30.

11 S. Tanvir Wasti, "Mushir Hosain Kidwai and the Ottoman Cause," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 2 (1994): 252–61.

12 I am deeply grateful to Kevin W. Fogg for sharing his ongoing research on H.O.S. Cokroaminoto, the father of Islamic politics in Indonesia, including his manuscript paper "Islamic Socialism from South Asia to Indonesia." Fogg has shown that Cokroaminoto's Indonesian work *Islam dan Socialisme* (1924) drew heavily on Kidwai's *Islam & Socialism* (London: Luzac & Co., *c.* 1912). Translated passages from Kidwai constitute the bulk of Cokroaminoto's text. Cokroaminoto also sent his son Harsono to South Asia to study Islam and Muslim culture in a society in which Muslims were a minority.

13 Ibid., ii–v. Although Kidwai acknowledged that Muhammad had not officially abolished slavery, he argued that indentured laborers in the British colonies "are treated far worse than were the workmen—the so-called slaves—under the Socialistic period of Islamic civilization." Kidwai, v.

14 Ibid., iii.

15 Ibid., vi–vii.

16 Ibid., xi.

17 See, for example, B.G. Bhatnagar, "The Religious Base in Indian Economy." *Indian Journal of Economics* [hereafter *IJE*] 5 (1924–25): 73–86; Dr. Balkrishna, "The Hindu Taxation System." *IJE* 8 (1927–28): 27–40, 89–117; Prem Chand Malhotra, "Scope of Economics: A Discussion of the Relation between Economics and Ethics." *IJE* 20 (1939–40): 451–58; G.D. Karwal, "Is Economics Non-Moral?" *IJE* 24 (1943–44): 75–80; Shri Narayan Agarwala, "A Religious Interpretation of Economics." *IJE* 26 (1945–46): 299–301.

18 Eric Lewis Beverley, *Hyderabad, British Indian, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c. 1850–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); John Roosa, "The Quandary of the Qaum: Indian Nationalism in a Muslim State, Hyderabad, 1850–1948" (PhD, University of Wisconsin, 1998).

19 Kavita Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013).

20 *Literary Services of the Compilation & Translation Bureau, Osmania University, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1917–1946* (Hyderabad: Osmania University Press, 1946).

21 Muhammad Ilyas Barni, *Usul-i-Ma'ashiyyat* (Hyderabad: Jami'ah Usmaniyah, 1922); *Ma'ishat-ul-Hind* (Hyderabad: Jami'ah Usmaniyah, 1929).

22 My own understanding of these writings on Islamic economy has been considerably enriched by Kavita Datla's argument that Osmania played a critical role in cultivating a secular "Urdu nationalism." *The Language of Secular Islam.*

23 Muhammad Hamidullah, "Haidarabad's Contribution to Islamic Economic Thought and Practice." *Die Welt Des Islams* 4, no. 2/3 (January 1955): 78.

24 Shah Muinudin Ahmad Nadvi, *Hayat-i-Sulaiman: Yani Daktar Allamah Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi ki Savanih Hayat aur Ilmi va Amli Karname* (Azamgarh: Dar ul-Musannefin, 1973), 32, 62; *Ishtirakiyat aur Islam* (Karachi: Maktabutat-ul-Sharq, 1954), 5.

25 *Dr. M. Alsam Khaki and Others* v. *Syed Muhammad Hashim and Others* 2000 All Pakistan Legal Decisions (52) 231, 410. Rida's Arabic text was published on

an Egyptian press in 1960, some thirty years after he received the query from Hyderabad.

26 Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 23–24.

27 As part of his early education, Hamidullah obtained an *ijazat* for Quranic recitation, a certificate that traced his educational lineage back to the Prophet himself. Muhammad al-Ghazali, "Dr Muhammad Hamidullah (1908–2002)." *Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (April 2003): 183–87; Mahmud Rifat Kademoglu, "Remembering Muhammad Hamidullah." *Islam & Science* 1, no. 1 (June 2003): 143–52. Muhammad Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State: Being a Treatise on Siyar (Siyar), That Is Islamic Notion of Public International Law* …, 3rd edn., rev. (Lahore: Ashraf, 1953), vi–vii.

28 M. Hamidullah, "Islam's Solution of the Basic Economic Problems." *Islamic Culture* 10, no. 2 (April 1936): 213–33.

29 Ibid., 213.

30 Ibid., 218.

31 Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Studying Hadith in a Madrasa in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Islam in South Asia in Practice*, ed. Barbara D. Metcalf (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 225–39.

32 Sayyid Manazir Ahsan Gilani, *Islami Ma'ashiyyat* (Lahore: Sang-i-Mill, 2007), 7. Gilani's introduction to the first edition is dated September 1945.

33 Abdel Haleem, M.A.S., trans., "Enfolded," in *The Qur'an. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-9780192831934/islam-9780192831934-chapter-73?astart=1&asize=20 (accessed August 30, 2012).

34 Gilani, *Islami Ma'ashiyyat*, 28.

35 Sayyid Manazir Ahsan Gilani, "Masalah-yi-Sod Muslim aur Harbi men," in *Maqalat-i-Gilani* (Lahore: Shaikh Zayid Islamic Center, 2004), quoted on 152.

36 Anwar Iqbal Qureshi, *The Farmer & His Debt: Being a Study of Farm Relief in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, with Suggestions for India* (London: Indian Rural Reconstruction League, 1934); *Agricultural Credit: Being a Study of Recent Developments in Agricultural Credit Administration in the United States of America* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1936); *The State and Economic Life: Being a Study of the Methods of State Intervention in Economic Life in the Leading Countries of the World* (Bombay: New Book Company, n.d., preface dated 1938); *State Banks for India: Being a Study of State Banks and Land Mortgage Credit Institutions in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States of America, with Suggestions for Establishing Similar Banks in India* (London: McMillan, 1939).

37 I have drawn the biographical information on Qureshi from materials provided in his publications.

38 Anwar Iqbal Qureshi, "The State and Economic Life: A Reply to Some of the Criticism." *IJE* 21 (1940–41): 30.

39 Anwar Iqbal Qureshi, *Islam and the Theory of Interest* (Lahore: Shaikh M. Ashraf, 1946), 16–17.

40 Wahidullah Khan, "Islami Qanun-i-Shirakat ke Usul ka Muqabala Hyderabad ke Qawanin se," MA dissertation, Osmania University, 1944; Ram Autar, "Hyderabad men Desi Bank Kari," MA dissertation, Osmania University, 1947. One of Gilani and Qureshi's students, Muhammad Yusufuddin, also produced another major work in Urdu on Islamic economy. *Islam ke Ma'ashi Nazarye* (Hyderabad: Matba-yi-Ibrahimiyah, 1950).

41 John Roosa, "Passive Revolution Meets Peasant Revolution: Indian Nationalism and the Telangana Revolt." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 28, no. 4 (July 2001): 57–94.

42 "Anwar Iqbal Qureshi," in Ahmad Saeed, *Muslim India, 1857–1947: A Biographical Dictionary* (Lahore: Institute of Pakistan Historical Research, 1997), 85. Hamidullah, "Haidarabad's Contribution to Islamic Economic Thought and Practice," 78.
43 Roy Jackson, *Mawlana Mawdudi and Political Islam: Authority and the Islamic State* (London: Routledge, 2011), 2. On Mawdudi's life and work, see also Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*.
44 Nasr includes an insightful, but very short, discussion of Mawdudi's economic thought. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, 103–06. Jackson (see above) mentions the topic only tangentially. In contrast, members of the Jama'at-i-Islami have built on Mawdudi's economic writings in their own extensive research on Islamic economics. See, for example, the work of Khursid Ahmad, who has both edited Mawdudi's writings on economics and produced a sizeable body of original work on the subject.
45 Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 254–65; Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, esp. 112.
46 Mushirul Hasan, "Aligarh Muslim University: Recalling Radical Days." *India International Centre Quarterly* 29, no. 3/4 (December 2002): 53.
47 Syed Abulala Maudoodi, *The Economic Problem of Man and Its Islamic Solution*, 2nd edn. (Lahore: Maktaba-e-Jama'at-e-Islami, 1955), 3. For an Urdu edition of the address, see Syed Abulala Maudoodi, *Insan ka Ma'ashi Masalah aur us ka Islami Hal* (Lahore: Markazi Maktabah-yi-Jama'at-i-Islami, 1953).
48 Ibid., 12.
49 Ibid., 19.
50 Ibid., 25.
51 Ibid., 43.
52 Ibid., 40.
53 Ibid., 46–47.
54 The earliest efforts, and failures, to translate emerging academic and popular conceptions of Islamic economy into practical political projects did not wait for independence. The evolution and eventual passage of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act in 1937 foreshadowed some of the challenges that would emerge in postcolonial Pakistan. Early advocacy for the act, which was supposed to replace customary practices with conformity to the *sharia*, emphasized its role in reducing economic inequality. The final act, however, excluded agricultural land, adoptions, wills, and legacies—ensuring the support of Punjabi Muslim landlords, but gutting it of its most critical economic components. On the history of the act, see David Gilmartin, "Kinship, Women, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Punjab," in *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, ed. Gail Minault (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1981), 165–67. On the specific influence of ideas of Islamic social justice in the legislative debates preceding the act, see my forthcoming book *Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in South Asia*.
55 Altaf Husain, foreword to *The Spirit of Pakistan*, by Fareed S. Jafri (Karachi: Ansari, 1951), 5.
56 Ali, "Communists in a Muslim Land," 508–10.
57 Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Future Development of Islamic Polity* (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1946), 1.
58 Ibid., 18.

59 Ibid., 19.
60 Ibid., 23.
61 Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *Pakistan; An Islamic Democracy* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, n.d.); *Pakistan: Ek Islami Jumhuriyat* (Lahore: Idarah-yi-Saqafat-i-Islami, n.d.).
62 Qureshi, *Pakistan*, 16.
63 Ibid., 23.
64 "The Cairo Crash," March 3, 2003, *Dawn* http://archives.dawn.com/weekly/dmag/archive/030330/ dmag5.htm (accessed June 21, 2012). The back covers of some of Jafri's later publications provided additional biographical information. Fareed S. Jafri, *Yugoslavia Today* (Place and Publisher Unknown, 1964); Fareed S. Jafri, *Eyewitness: Modern Sudan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1964).
65 Fareed S. Jafri, *The Spirit of Pakistan* (Karachi: Ansari, 1951), 25.
66 Ibid., 102.
67 Fareed Jafri, "Communism in the Muslim World," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 40, no. 2 (April 1953): 161–68, quoted 162, 166.
68 Mazheruddin Siddiqi, *Hegel, Marx aur Islami Nizam*, 2nd edn. (Pathankot: Tarjuman-ul-Quran, 1945), 28.
69 Mazheruddin Siddiqi, *Marxism or Islam?*, 2nd edn. (Lahore: Orientalia, 1954), quoted on iii, 141.
70 "Report of the 1953 Harvard International Seminar," Harvard University Archives, Summer School of Arts and Sciences and of Education, Special Program Files, UAV 813.141.25, Part I: 1. See also Siddiqi's account of the trip, Mazheruddin Siddiqi, *Impressions of the United States* (Lahore: Orientalia, 1955).
71 Department of State Memorandum from Wilson S. Compton to David K.E. Bruce, "Colloquium on Islamic Culture to Be Held in September, 1953, under the Joint Sponsorship of the Library of Congress and Princeton University," January 13, 1953, US National Archives, Records of the Department of State, Decimal Files, 1950–54, reproduced in "Documentation on Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda Activities in the Middle East," National Security Archives, George Washington University, Document 89, http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB78/propaganda%20089.pdf (accessed June 1, 2017).
72 Mazheruddin Siddiqi to Mr. Kissinger, September 1, 1953, in "Report of the 1953 Harvard International Seminar," Appendix A.
73 On the relationship between Islamism and the growing power of the state, see Nasr, *Islamic Leviathan*.
74 On debates about the role of Islam in Pakistan's constitution, see Leonard Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).
75 Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: C. Hurst, 1998), 125–47.
76 Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, March 9, 1949, Vol. 5, no. 3, 39.
77 Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, March 7, 1949, Vol. 5, no. 1, 6.
78 Ali, "Communists in a Muslim Land."
79 Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, November 3, 1953, Vol. 15, no. 21, 669–70. Although the Constitution specified that after twenty-five years a commission should consider how these areas could be brought in line with the injunctions of the Quran and *sunna*, the exemption effectively removed economic matters from the state's program of Islamic reform
80 Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, October 22, 1953, Vol. XV, no. 11, 283.

81 Nasr, *Islamic Leviathan*, 76–79; 144–46.

82 On the need to recover alternative conceptions of postcolonial governance, see Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (2008): 167–96; Sugata Bose, "Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development," in *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, eds. Frederick Cooper and Randall M. Packard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 45–63.

14

Straight from Mecca: Medan, Hamka, and the Coming of Islam to Indonesia

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Introduction

President Sukarno's rhetoric, until the effective end of his tumultuous presidency in October of 1965, was of constant resistance to colonial forces. Indeed, with the revolution of 1945–49 having soon bled into the Darul Islam insurgency (1949–62), and all against the background of the resurgence of the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI), the idea of a unified Indonesia would be increasingly bruited against the threat of "neo-colonial" forces then at work in creating the bounds of neighboring Malaysia. And even if Indonesia had only just had its own borders determined with the UN designation of Dutch New Guinea as a future province in 1962, many Indonesian writers who were active under the shadow of Sukarno were also trying to develop the idea of a unitary past for the vast archipelago already bearing the national slogan *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*—a very Sanskritic form of *E Pluribus Unum*.

In what follows, I will argue that some of Sukarno's increasingly marginalized detractors would try to claim that past for Islam. Foremost among them was Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, 1908–81), who sought to claim the limelight at a seminar held in early 1963 at the Sumatran town of Medan. For it was in Medan that Hamka had made his name as a journalist, and it was here that he would seemingly emerge victorious against an allegedly colonial vision of an Indianized past, and for the briefest of postcolonial moments.

A 1963 history of the coming of Islam to Indonesia

Signed by its compilers on the eighteenth anniversary of independence, on August 17, 1963, the paperback volume of some 307 pages would appear, at first glance, to be what it announces itself to be. With its cover depicting a mosque set against a projection of the globe, though without the Americas, here was the definitive "History of the Coming of Islam to Indonesia" (*Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia*).[1] Certainly it

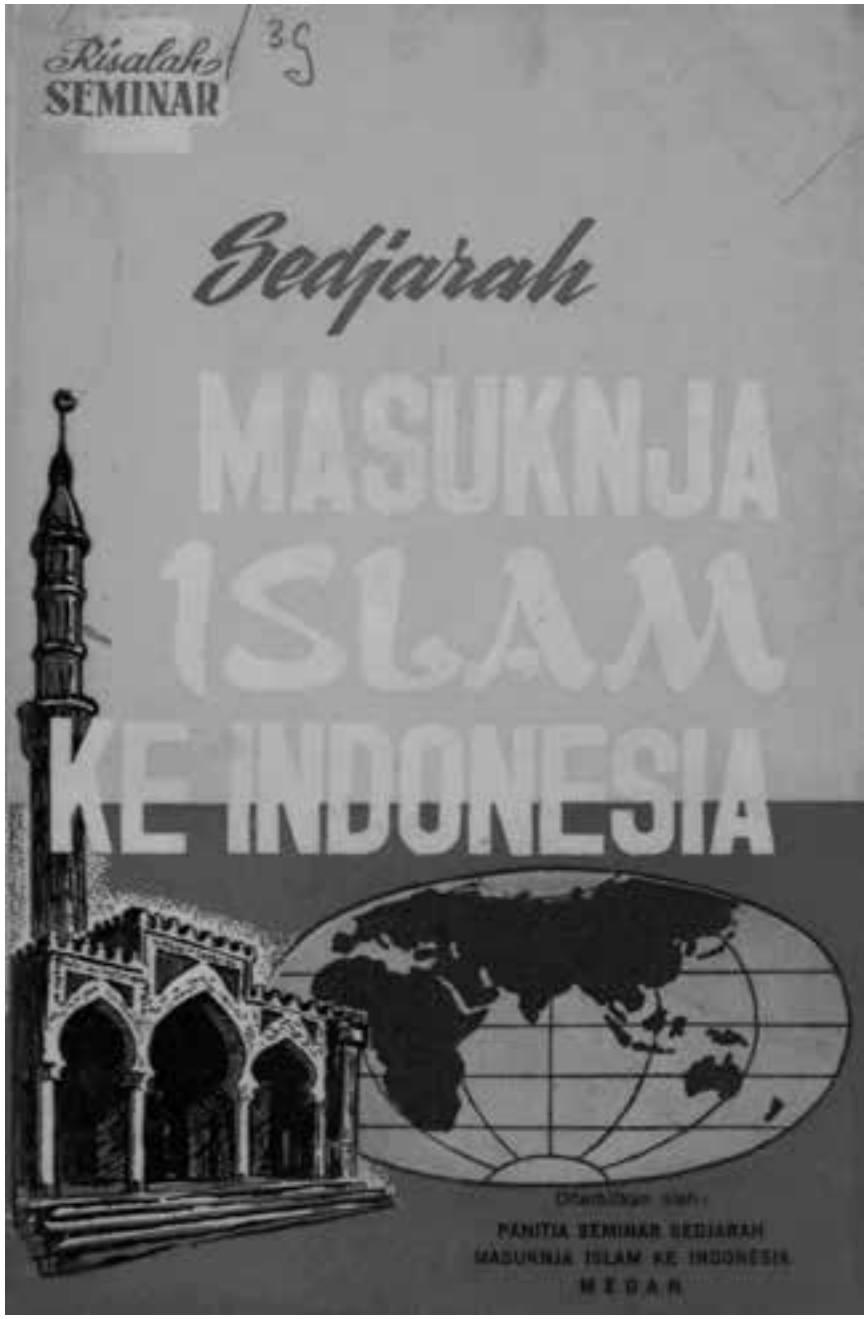

Figure 14.1 The cover of the first edition of *Risalah Seminar Sedjarah Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia*.

resembled many of the heroic narratives that had spilled off the presses of Sukarno's republic. These included such titles as the 1953 biography *Gajah Mada*, written by the then minister of education Muhammad Yamin (1903–62). Yamin's text gave a history of the achievements of the "Chief Minister" of the ancient Javanese Empire of Majapahit, and cast him as "the hero of the unification of Nusantara"—the latter being the term used by some scholars to describe the archipelago.[2] Equally one can point to dramatist Sanusi Pane's two-volume *Sedjarah Indonesia* (History of Indonesia) of 1955–56, which hewed closely to older Dutch accounts of the region that began with "Nusantara before the arrival of the Hindus" and ended in the heroism of the Revolution of 1945–49.[3]

Islam made its first appearance in Pane's narrative in the person of King Malik al-Salih, who epigraphy had shown had ruled the North Sumatran port of Samudra-Pasai up to his death in 1297.[4] Equally, Muhammad Kasim and Oejeng S. Gana's three-volume school text, *Zaman Dahulu, Sekarang dan Jang Akan Datang* (The Past, Present and Future Ages) completed in 1956, followed the same narrative of Indianization, unification, Islamization (in the thirteenth century and from Gujarat), colonialism, and, ultimately, revolution.[5] Whereas the projects of Yamin and Pane had been published by the Balai Pustaka—the quasi-official publisher that had emerged from a Dutch attempt to direct the tastes of an emergent public in the 1920s—that of Kasim and Gana was produced on a Bandung-based press with links to Amsterdam just prior to the nationalization of Dutch company interests in late 1957.[6]

Closer inspection shows, however, that rather than being an approved state text that meshed with the aforementioned tomes, the *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia* is actually the proceedings of a seminar (the first two words of the full title— "Seminar Proceedings"—are unobtrusively printed in a smaller font) that had hoped to instill in Indonesians a desire to know more about their shared Islamic history, and from their own sources. Its planners had moreover aspired for it to be a "scientific" (*ilmijah*) reevaluation of the story of the coming of Islam to Indonesia and a clear step away from Western, or certainly Dutch, historiography that Indonesians were used to.[7] Indeed, the *Risalah Seminar* is an absorbing collection of plans, speeches (some not actually delivered by their authors), and reflections offered in March of 1963 at the Sumatran city of Medan, which had emerged as a center for Islamic publishing in the 1930s. One of Medan's most famous offerings was the journal *Pedoman Masyarakat* (Society's Compass). Indeed, the most notable participant in 1963 was the *Pedoman*'s original editor and great populizer of Islam, Hamka. Also the author of an as yet incomplete four-volume global history of Islam, *The Sedjarah Umat Islam* (commenced in 1950), Hamka had made his career in Medan before falling from grace after his rather too-active collaboration with the Japanese and precipitous flight with the arrival of the Allied forces in 1945.[8]

The aim of the 1963 text was, of course, didactic. Setting aside the rough-hewn editing, one might expect that it proved influential in the years after its publication. Yet this book would be washed aside by the turmoil of the mid-1960s, ending up in a few Western libraries rather than all Indonesian classrooms, much as Hamka would shortly be confined to internal exile. Even so, the *Sedjarah* is a useful window for us to peer onto a decidedly postcolonial moment that played out some eighteen years after the founding fathers had declared independence from the Dutch. It also appeared at a

moment deeply connected to the ongoing search for a national language of unity that begrudgingly admitted its linkages to neighboring—and rival—Malay(si)a. Beyond this it valorized the restive province of Aceh as being the emblematic first landing point of a fully Muslim national genius to be mobilized in the face of the nearly hegemonic PKI.

To be sure, Indonesia in 1963 was far from an avowedly Islamic republic. Its majority population was, of course, Muslim. Yet the preceding decades had seen a shift away from early Islamic leadership on questions of national definition to an agenda set by a core of Dutch-trained technicians and secularists, some of whom were as much attuned to the writings of Marx as the teachings of Muhammad. The leader of the primordial nationalist movement, Sarekat Islam, H. O. S. Cokroaminoto (1882–1934)—whose Surabayan home had hosted both a young Sukarno and his Islamist rival Kartosuwiryo (1905–62)—offered a lengthy (and plagiarized) essay in 1924 on the intersections of Marxism and Islam, explaining that Islam was actually the purist form of Socialism, and not to be confused with the "scientific" (*wetenschappelijk*) variant of well-meaning Europeans.[9] That said, one of his former allies, Mohamad Misbach (1876–1926), briefly made a name for himself at this time as the "Red Hadji" of the Insulinde Party that rose to prominence in strike-torn Surakarta as Sarekat Islam lost political ground under the more cautious direction of the Dutch-educated Agus Salim (1884–1954).[10]

Not only was Salim educated in Dutch, he was closely linked to the "modernist" trend in Islamic thought that connected people like himself to Egypt and India, though he rejected that particular appellation as much as the veneration of saints. Of course, one must remember that Dutch was referenced everywhere, and not merely by those few Indonesians to have been educated in the language, and occasionally in the Netherlands itself. In his opening address to the Medan meeting, even the more "traditionalist" Javanese minister of religion, K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri (1919–86), would cite the Dutch novelist Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820–87), claiming that "Indonesia" (a term Douwes Dekker hardly used, given his preference for his own coining "Insulinde") would not have had its patriotism were it not for Islam, and that the seminar would thus form "Fertile soil and a foundation for 'nation building.'"[11]

Western-educated socialists had long been at the forefront of defining the space so many Southeast Asian Muslims called home. Expatriate students, like the erstwhile vice president Mohammad Hatta (1902–80), had set the bounds of the nation to come in Leiden, at Youth Conferences in Java, and among expatriate "Jawi" students in Cairo in the early and mid-1920s. But few nationalists were convinced allies of the Comintern or found in Cairo. Others, most especially Sukarno and his party founded in 1928, emerged in the archipelago itself to claim the mantle of leadership of colonized Indonesia, gaining in stature through imprisonment for press offences in the 1930s, and then opportunity under the Japanese who released and elevated them from 1942 to 1945.

It was under the Japanese, after all, that the very name Indonesia would be officially recognized. This was relatively late in the occupation and well after the landmark Bandung Youth Congress of 1928 whose delegates had first declared on home soil that there was one Indonesian people, one Indonesian land, and one Indonesian language. Or rather, the assembled youths had agreed that there should be an effort made to

encourage the development of one Indonesian language, based on the once Islamicate vernacular of Malay, a vernacular that was still inflected by Sanskritic terms. Not least of these was the term for independence itself: Kemerdekaan.[12]

When two days after the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, a group of revolutionary youths forced Sukarno and Hatta to announce Kemerdekaan, their hard-scrabble proclamation—the famous Proklamasi referred to in Chapter 3—was naturally made in Indonesian. Still, it did not reflect the same degree of aspirational planning and consensus reflected in that of Ho Chi Minh two weeks later, or Nehru some two years later again. This is not to say that debate and planning were alien to the nationalist elite. As defeat loomed for the Japanese, a series of meetings had been held in Jakarta, from late May 1945, by a varied mix of figures from across the religio-political spectrum who were seeking to thrash out the ideological foundations of the state in waiting.[13] Monotheism was the resultant first principle of the famous framework of Pancasila, or Five Principles, largely drafted by Muhammad Yamin. Moreover, in this formulation Islam became but one of five recognized faiths, even as Sukarno declared that this was but a temporary measure following the erasure of a previous draft that had stipulated that it was obligatory for Muslims to adhere to the Sharia.

As Chiara Formichi has shown, from the moment the returning Dutch engaged in a three-way struggle with the Republican leadership and unincorporated nationalists of an Islamic stripe in 1945, the new state would be saddled with the problem of what were collectively known as the Darul Islam insurgencies.[14] This was most particularly the case in the highlands of West Java, where Kartosuwiryo had his base, though the provinces of South Sulawesi and Aceh would see major guerilla battles too. And even as Sukarno basked in the limelight at such global events as the Asian-African Conference of 1955, he oversaw a series of rickety cabinets that excluded members of the Muslim Socialist Masyumi Party and made an inexorable turn to authoritarianism by late 1957.[15] This created the final grievances for an Islamically tinged movement known as Permesta (Perjuangan Semesta) to attempt to secede in Sumatra and Sulawesi in 1958.[16] More moderate and often modernist Islamic politicians based in Jakarta—many with roots in Sumatra and the Minangkabau region of West Sumatra in particular—meanwhile tried to adapt to Sukarno's capricious flow within the political space they were allowed under Masyumi, though they, and indeed many members of the military, watched both the final suppression of the Permesta and then Darul Islam (with which they were also tarred by Sukarno) with great alarm. They would indeed be next.

Of course, not all of the military were opposed to Islam, even as they recognized the danger of some provincial Islamists. By late 1962, and as the leaders of the Darul Islam were neutralized, the Sumatran commander of the national army, Abdul Haris Nasution (1918–2000), would cast a worried eye over the ascendant PKI, back from the brink of destruction after a rebellion of their own in Madiun, Java, in 1948. Nasution was arguably the most important patron for a movement of Muslim politicians. As Rush has shown, this group had made Hamka's new "Great Al-Azhar" mosque—named after the Egyptian institution that had awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1958—their redoubt of prayer and protest against the creeping hegemony of the

PKI.[17] Certainly, Nasution was favorably inclined to public Islamization in the face of the communist threat, and he lauded the growth of new Islamic Institutes of Higher Education (PTAIN). He also seems to have been the first to react publicly to calls from the faculty of one such institute, Medan's Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, to bring nationally regarded scholars together to explain the roots of their common faith.

Having emerged in the late nineteenth century as a frontier town of colonial capital, Medan had been dominated by plantations and migrant Chinese and Javanese labor. It nonetheless became, after Java's Surabaya, one of the most important sites of Malay/Indonesian print journalism in the Netherlands Indies; though this was an admittedly late development of the 1920s.[18] It was also, as noted above, a city closely linked to the Muslim reformist movements of West Sumatra and the Straits Settlements, edging onto the erstwhile domains of the Acehnese sultanate to the north. And even if Aceh was a problematic space for the Indonesian state, being the focus of a branch of the Darul Islam, its ancestral court had been a key repository for classical Malay texts and, importantly, the custodian of some of the oldest royal Muslim graves in the archipelago, most of which were found in the vicinity of the old twin port of Samudra-Pasai.[19]

Modern Medan moreover mirrored and served Singapore across the Straits of Malacca, and had been the natural choice for the 1954 congress on "the Indonesian Language." Effacing the aspirational phrasing of the 1928 youth declaration that urged people to *propagate* Indonesian, this event became an important step in decolonizing the language shared with Malaya. For even as many participants recognized the efforts of Dutch scholars to define and standardize the language that they, like their British colleagues, had called Malay, Indonesian nationalists would commit to purging it of Dutch spelling conventions and engaging literati in the ongoing project of "advancing," "building," or "growing" their *Bahasa Indonesia*.[20]

Of academics and ulama

It was at Medan in 1954, too, that debate had raged about the relationship of Islam to the national character, as the ubiquitous Hamka would note in his opening address to the Seminar of 1963.[21] Still, if anyone wanted to point to the embodiment of a national character in 1963, then perhaps Sukarno would have expected many of his fellow-citizens to deem him to be it. With his populist claims to represent the "little man" (whom he often dubbed "Marhaen" after a peasant he had supposedly met in West Java)[22] and his abrogation of constitutional democracy, Sukarno wanted to embody a nation that was united and strong on the global stage. It is hardly surprising therefore that the *Sedjarah* would be tactically dedicated to him as all things to all people. Invoked as the "Great Leader of the Revolution," who had "reenacted the constitution of '45 in July of 1959," Sukarno was further hailed by his titles as paramount Doctor, Engineer, and (since 1955) Hajji.[23]

Such doffings of caps were an expected part of state ritual by this time, and there were plenty of national luminaries on hand to open the event, like the aforementioned minister of religion, Zuhri. Yet one should still bear in mind that

the fledgling Islamic institutes were as yet beyond the embrace of the state that had excluded members of Masyumi in favor of the PKI, and that, even with the close references to welcoming speeches penned in Jakarta, the seminar was actually a privately organized affair. Photos of the event show a hall filled with men in white suits and black caps, beside occasional military uniforms, and the distinctly lightly attired minority of women participants, such as Indonesia's first female professor of literature, Tudjimah.

General Nasution's attendance of the closing session was a tribute to his personal, rather than officially sanctioned, interest. Indeed, he was among the first contributors to fund the event that nonetheless failed to raise the 1,250 rupiah it was thought would be needed.[24] To be sure, the pointedly *Doctor* Hamka—who supplied his extensive remarks in the form of two rejoinders to the less-awarded *Doctorandes* M. D. Mansoer—was hardly the darling of Sukarno's cabinet and most especially the openly communist Agency for Popular Culture (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, LEKRA, founded in 1950), which was holding the whip hand over officially sanctioned literature. Indeed, the partisans of LEKRA, following the lead of Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925–2006), had recently hounded Hamka for plagiarizing his best-selling novel, *Tenggelamnja Kapal van der Wijck* (1939), claiming that its plot had been lifted wholesale from an Egyptian work by Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti (1876–1924).[25]

Beyond this political background, though—and after the opening speeches of (the momentarily absent) General Nasution; Roeslan Abdulghani, the minister of information; Chaerul Saleh, the head of the (Provisional) Upper House; and Saifuddin Zuhri, the afore-mentioned Minister of Religion[26]—the following two days would see something of a tussle between two distinct streams of thinking about the past. Reacting at one point to Hamka's criticisms of his work, Mansoer harked back to the prewar writings of Mohammad Natsir (1908–93), a well-known ideologue of Masyumi and former prime minister who had supported the Permesta rebellion. Yet another native of the Minangkabau region, Natsir had also supported early calls for the institution of Islamic higher education in the then Dutch colony. Moreover, in June 1938, and in the pages of *Pandji Islam* and Hamka's *Pedoman Masjarakat*, Natsir had urged for recognition of the intellectual equality of those who chose to make Leiden, London, or Berlin their school of thought (*madzhab*) together with those oriented to Cairo, Mecca, Aligarh, and Delhi.[27]

In Mansoer's view, it was only the revolution of 1945 that had allowed the two groups to meet again in Medan, though this seemingly yawning gap had only been a temporary crack that had emerged after the 1920s, when students in Cairo could still hope that their educations were but stepping-stones to futures mediated in Paris or Rotterdam. After all, many of their number were in close communication with members of the by then *Indonesian* Students Association in the Netherlands, including future vice president Hatta, and they had only reluctantly parted company with their Malay colleagues in 1925.[28] Equally, Nasution's address invoked the spirit of Agus Salim, the leader of Sarekat Islam in the 1920s and then revolutionary minister of foreign affairs from 1947 to 1949, as the rare intellectual child of both an Islamicate and Dutch education. Salim, yet another ethnic Minangkabau, had been among

the first to call in the 1930s for a thorough reinvestigation of indigenous and non-Western—namely, Chinese and Arabic—sources as a means of shedding light onto the coming of Islam to Indonesia.[29]

Sources Western, Sources Eastern

The search for sources was clearly paramount in 1963. Many of the first participants to speak at Medan offered attempts at reading Western and non-Western sources alike, though with mixed success, and clear disagreement as to where to draw the line between myth and respectable documentation. Hamka and Mansoer argued, for instance, over the totemic value of folk etymologies for the name of the former Muslim entrepot of Samudra, supposedly derived from the words *semut raja* or "great ant." Nomenclature aside, much hinged on identifying the first landfall of Islam in the archipelago (assumed to be somewhere on the northwestern tip of Sumatra and anachronistically designated as Aceh), and then determining the agency of its disseminators. But while the offerings referenced many earlier, and often British, writers who had speculated on the Arabness of traders moving between India and China in the first centuries of Islam—with such claims being validated by Sir Thomas Arnold (1864–1930), who was well liked in reformist circles for his works *The Preaching of Islam* (1896) and *The Caliphate* (1924)—when it came to indigenous sources, the paper givers were largely compelled to follow in the footsteps of Dutch orientalists.

Perhaps least avoidable were those of the former head of the Office for Native Affairs, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936), as well as the epigraphers J. P. Moquette (1857–1927) and J. L. Moens (1887–1954), who had researched the funerary monuments of Aceh. Equally, recourse would be made to the most recent editions of texts like the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* (The Story of the Kings of Pasai), freshly examined by one of the very last members of the former Office for Native Affairs, Hans Teeuw (1921–2012), who had also been a rapporteur for the Indonesian language congress of 1954.[30] Indeed, the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* was held to be perhaps the best example of historical documentation produced by an indigenous Muslim literatus (*pujangga*). This was because it had been composed in a land that would one day be a part of Indonesia, rather than neighboring Malaysia, which sourced its political myths by contrast from the more expansive *Sejarah Melayu*, which told of the rise of the Sultanate of Malacca around 1400 until its cataclysmic fall to the Portuguese in 1511.

The major problem, though, and one acknowledged by most presenters, was that the hoped-for early dates of Sumatra's Islamization were not to be found inscribed on any Acehnese monuments. Neither were they traceable in such texts as the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*. Even with some rather creative tweakings of genealogies, all such evidence still pointed to the thirteenth century and to the celebrated tomb of Sultan Malik al-Salih (d. 1297), who would have been lord of Pasai when Marco Polo made his pass through the region in 1292. What made such a regrettable state of affairs

worse, though, and most especially for Hamka, who was capable of reading Arabic sources and Dutch synopses alike, was the very colonial nature of the production of such knowledge.[31] To his mind this had deprived Indonesians of any agency in the stories of their own Islamization, which they could no longer even read in *their* own form of the Arabic script, given the widespread adoption of roman script in Indonesia and Malaya alike.[32]

From their respective readings of the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, too, Mansoer and Hamka disagreed loudly on the lines between fact and fiction and the putative agents of Islam. As the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* had it, the Prophet had foretold the rise of a Muslim polity in Sumatra and that his lineal descendant, the Sharif of Mecca, would dispatch an emissary by way of Southern India to meet the already-converted king. For Mansoer, who relied on roman-script editions of the text that mistakenly gave the name King Mu'tabar (هلك مءتبو) for the ruler of southern India (هلك مءعبو), heterogeneity of inspiration was hardly a problem for his country's now uniformly Sunni juridical identity. Hence, he and his Dutch-reading supporters were willing to see anachronistically Shi'i Persians, or else Gujaratis, Chinese, and Tamils engaged in the early phases of bringing Islam to the archipelago, even as they proudly evoked Indonesian traditions of oceanic navigation, and especially that of the Buddhist thallasocracy of Srivijaya, which had laid claim to parts of neighboring Malaya between the seventh and eleventh centuries.

For Hamka, though, any story of Indian origins, emulation, or (worse!) Shi'i deviation, was inherently the result of a demeaning colonial narrative which would not allow for the historical conformity of Indonesian and Arab Islam. The main fault lay with Snouck it seemed. Citing the French version of the Dutchman's inaugural professorial lecture given in Leiden in 1907, Hamka claimed that the orientalist had decreed that no Arab had Islamized the Indonesians. This had indeed been Snouck's argument. Pointing to the echoes of so many Persian loan words and enthusiasm for the "pantheistic" philosophy of the Perfect Man, not to mention the physical location of the subcontinent as a natural way station *en route* to Indonesia (which was a term Snouck *did* use for the region), the Dutch professor had argued that the archipelago's Islam had come in a modified form through Indian hands and minds.[33]

To Hamka's mind, though, Snouck had claimed that a "Kling"—the demeaning term used to describe many a plantation laborer—had brought an impure Islam to his ancestors.[34] Indeed for Hamka, it was as much a matter of ethnic as doctrinal purity, and he argued vociferously that any traders making their way to Indonesia had merely stopped on the Malabar Coast, where they would have preferred to associate with other Arab traders already in residence there. Like the much early Arabo-centric writer Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1658), then, whose attacks on the pantheisms of Sumatra became legendary when he was based in Aceh in the seventeenth century, Hamka rejected theories of intermarriage and hybridity.[35]

Ronit Ricci's nuanced argument for a variegated Arabicate Cosmopolis would not have resonated with Hamka.[36] To him it was nothing short of a plot hatched by the admittedly gifted Snouck to sink Indonesian Islam in a mire of Indo-Persianate mysticism. He furthermore fulminated at every suggestion of "Tamil" influence based

on the regular reference to the survival in the archipelago of such southern Indian terms as *Lebai*—used for a Mosque official or community leader—in the face of dozens of more clearly Arabic borrowings.[37]

It should also be pointed out here that in rejecting an allegedly hegemonic narrative of Indian origin, Hamka was not necessarily upsetting his audience. Others, including Mansoer, had already recalled the 1955–56 tour of Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Nainar with annoyance. Apparently Nainar, known for his doctoral work on Arab geographical knowledge of southern India and by then professor at the University of Madras, had been sent to the new Republic from India by Sukarno's great ally Nehru, to be shown around the Sumatran towns of Padang, Bukittinggi, and Medan as a part of his larger itinerary.[38] Yet while his earlier written work had focused on the importance of Arab accounts in generating an image of the premodern world, his lectures seemed to echo the pronouncements of the Greater India Society of Bengal to insist on an Indian origin for absolutely everything of value in the archipelago.[39]

A hint of this was already evident in his short pamphlet of 1954, *Java as Noticed by Arab Geographers*. Here, Nainar catalogued geographic notices of the region in general before offering a tentative conclusion regarding the great Maharaja mentioned in the early texts as having been a king from Southern India, who had sent out colonists "who were more civilized than the local inhabitants."[40] This apparently paled in comparison to Nainar's lectures, published by the Information Service of India in 1956.[41] Citing this work, an infuriated Mansoer bemoaned how Indonesians (and Sumatrans in particular) were seen as dirty and did not bury their dead. He quoted Nainar (in garbled English) to the effect that they were regarded as akin to "the dogs, pigs and monkeys eating stupid Bataks".[42] "We Indonesians protest!," declaimed Mansoer, who added that saying that Indonesia had had a "Hindu period" was like assigning it a "Dutch period."[43]

Hamka could not but agree, though in advancing his version of an exclusively Arab vector of Islamization, Hamka was not linking his narrative to a yet-more exclusive claim to Hadrami origins often found in the literature today, and which was only then emerging in the often-referenced writings of the Mufti of Johore, Sayyid Alwi bin Tahir al-Haddad (1885–1962).[44] To be sure, Hamka would have reacted poorly if the absent Aboebakar Atjeh's speech had been read to the congress, given the Jakarta-based scholar had made use of the work of al-Haddad and that of the Syrian-American Najeeb writing on the Philippines, to suggest a particularly Yemeni cause for Islamization in the archipelago.[45] Indeed, Aboebakar Atjeh proposed that members of the Umayyad Clan, fleeing the ascendant Abbasids in the 750s, had brought with them a commitment to Zaydism, a form of Shi'ism that is often asserted as being closest to Sunni norms. So close, in fact, that Cairo's Rashid Rida had even advocated that Imam Yahya of Yemen was qualified to serve as a temporary caliph after the Kemalist dissolution of the office in 1922.[46]

For Hamka, though, Zaydism had little appeal, however close it could be made to Sunnism. It was rather the immediate family of the Prophet—who he happily noted had been ensconced in Mecca for many more centuries than any Habsburg had been around—who were to be seen as the key inspirers of devotional connection, and

naturally prior to the Abbasid conquest (and Persianization!) of Islamicate culture after 750. Hamka was thus more than happy to cite Thomas Arnold's acceptance of an Arab presence in Sumatra by 684.[47] Of course, it was also during the late Abbasid period that Sufism would flourish, and Hamka was rather inconsistent on the utility of the mystics as historical agents. While his own grandfather had even been a Sufi Shaykh, his father, Haji Rasul (1879–1945), had been a scourge of such teachers in West Sumatra from the 1910s. Indeed, Haji Rasul had been at the vanguard of the emergent leadership of the Kaum Muda, a faction of *ulama* allied to Rashid Rida in particular.

For Haji Rasul and Hamka alike, Sufism could function as a mechanism within the evolution of Islamic thought, but only when it conformed to Arab historical norms. Thus, even as Hamka had penned his own best-selling work on a modern mysticism freed of the clutches of greedy divines (*Tasauf Modern*, 1939)—casting archaic Sufism as the gateway for unwanted Persianate deviation and philosophizing in ages past—he was still prepared, as a historian, to overlook the clearly mystical proclivities of past Southeast Asian Islamizers. He even drew attention to a long-neglected figure, Mas'ud al-Jawi, mentioned in the work of the great Yemeni compiler of the fourteenth century, Abu 'Abdallah bin As'ad al-Yafi'i.[48] That this person—seemingly an "Indonesian" Sufi living and teaching in Aden at a time when Malik al-Salih had ruled over Pasai—passed into relative oblivion once more after the seminar is evidence of its limited impact on later Indonesian historiography.[49]

In any case, at the core of Hamka's argument was a continuum of personal interactions between Indonesians and Arabs (but never Indians), whose dislike of unbelief and the word *kafir* he likened to the passion awakened in modern Indonesians at the mention of "Colonialism, Imperialism and Neo-Colonialism."[50] The latter specter was often noted in Medan, with some, such as Mansoer, lauding Indonesia's role on the world stage in bringing China and India together to resolve the looming question of an independent and much-expanded Malaysia, only just labeled by Sukarno as a "Neocolonial" entity.[51]

Others were meanwhile disingenuous about their claims not to tread too heavily on Malay territory in constructing their arguments for the spread of Islam in the archipelago as a whole. Djasmun Qoharuddin Nasution, for instance, said that, setting aside that Kedah had once been a territory of the (Indonesian) kingdom of Srivijaya, he had decided not to talk about it as an object of study so as not to upset the "panicked" Malaysian premier Tunku Abdul Rahman (1903–90).[52] And even if the *Sejarah Melayu* had absorbed elements of the conversion narrative from the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, few made such an explicit claim. Malay was simply noted as a source, though never *the* source for the national language. After all, to embrace that name was to validate both the colonial past and the "Neocolonial" aspirations of the Tunku who had first proclaimed *Merdeka* for Malaysia with the indulgence of Great Britain, in 1957.

Indeed, in the weeks after the formal announcement of Sukarno's policy of Konfrontasi on January 20, 1963, there was a hesitant tone set at the conference about the intentionality of Orientalist scholarship which, after all, had offered the thesis of peaceful conversion in the first place. It just seemed to come down, at least

publicly, to whether one's nation had directly colonized Indonesia or not, or if it used the language of colonization to claim a historical link to that space. While Indian scholars and Persian or Chinese ambassadors were ridiculed for proposing their own particular homelands as agents of the diffusion of the faith, Hamka made yet more convoluted moves to valorize the pro-Arab arguments of Arnold against those of Snouck, who was further seen as an antagonist of certain (elite) sections of the Hadrami community during the Great War, and indeed of Arab migration in general.[53]

Apparently unaware that Snouck and Arnold had been collaborators on the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Hamka emphasized that Arnold had been an Englishman "who was more inclined to scholarship and less enthusiastic for the colonial attitude of the times."[54] Hamka recalled that Arnold had taught at the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh, founded by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and that Mohammad Iqbal had even been one of his students. Modern Indians of a generally reformist and northern stripe were acceptable to Hamka it seems, as opposed to the southern traders and Sufis of former epochs. Hamka had even spent time in 1924 studying under the Lahori Ahmadi, Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig, as he would later write to one of Snouck's heirs, G. F. Pijper (1893–1988).[55]

By sharp contrast to Arnold, then, Snouck had been an advisor to the Dutch government in the process of the conquest of Aceh in the 1890s, and had been asked to determine the root cause of the modern resistance, namely the Arabs, whose influence had been "greater than that stemming from Turkey, Hindustan or even Buchara."[56] In sum, Hamka bemoaned the Indonesians had been "scientifically compelled" to see Islam as having come from India while evidence of ongoing and direct Arab influence was actively suppressed.[57]

Of course, in mining Snouck's writings and those of his many emulators, Hamka did have a begrudging admiration for the erstwhile patron of the great Agus Salim. This could even become outright respect in his private correspondence. In September 1951, for instance, Hamka had responded with great pleasure to Pijper's request for his personal information for a project to write a history of recent developments in Indonesian Islam, reflecting how such a work would "increase our understanding of ourselves" and adding that "the offerings of the Western scholar, with his careful investigations, cannot be denied."[58] Four years later, he had thanked Pijper for having forwarded his inaugural lecture at the University of Amsterdam, once more praising the services of Dutch historians from the days of Reinhart Dozy (1820–93) on. He even appears at first blush to have paid Snouck a very pre-Saidian compliment, repeating Shakib Arslan's designating him as "the Shaykh of the Orientalists" (شيخ المستشرقين).[59]

Then again, G. W. Drewes (1899–1993), Pijper's rival for the hard-won affections of their late master Snouck, would diminish the efforts of Hamka and the Seminar in passing in a larger review article published in 1968.[60] Certainly, wishful thinking had animated some of the conversations leading up to and then well into the tail end of the proceedings on the second day. A disappointed Dada Mereuxa (b. 1920), for example, reported troubled negotiations with the keepers of the graves of Barus, on Sumatra's Northwest Coast, who claimed possession of texts proving the presence of

Muslim rulers in the first decades of Islam, or yet gravestones of individuals whose epitaphs were read as early as 48 of the Muslim calendar. Equally, the narrative of Hadji Muhammad Said, who spoke on the second day, was a difficult excursion through sources old and new. It elicited responses that were by turns confused or cursory from Djasmun Nasution and Tudjimah. If M. Mansoer had warned the seminar's audience not to expect an answer to their questions as to the precise when, where and who of Islamization, Muhammad Said seemed more than ready to oblige with a lack of clarity.[61]

Even with all the debate, and Mansoer's generous acknowledgments of the feisty Hamka—"I am the historian, he is the Muslim scholar-cum-literatus"[62]—the seminar's conclusions would seem to have hewn closely to the line advocated by his adversary. In short, the committee announced seven findings and called for the government to back publication and dissemination. Following were the findings:

- According to the sources we know, Islam first came to Indonesia in the first century of the Muslim Calendar and directly from Arabia.
- The first area encountered by Islam was the coast of Sumatra, and that after the formation of an Islamic community, the first Muslim rulers were in Aceh.
- Indonesians played an active part in the ongoing process of Islamization.
- The ancient preachers of Islam were, aside from being propagators, also traders.
- The dissemination of Islam in Indonesia was achieved through peaceful means.
- The coming of Islam brought advancement and high culture in forming the Indonesian national character.
- A broader and more established body must be founded for the study and dissemination of Islamic history in Indonesia. It is proposed that this body will have its headquarters in Medan, and other places if necessary, with additional branches as required most especially in Jakarta.

Hamka was triumphant. His argument about agency and direction had been validated, and of course the transmission of religion to a place that was to be culturally defined by Islam had been undertaken peacefully, which was the polar opposite of Dutch colonial methodology over centuries past.

Setting aside the competition with Mansoer and the rhetoric of transcending the colonial, it did not seem to matter that these conclusions were not a very large deviation from the narrative constructed by Dutch academics in the colonial era. Even the notion of Indonesians playing the vital role in their own development had been pushed by scholars such as W. F. Stutterheim (1894–1942) in the face of the bombastic rhetoric of the Greater India scholars of Bengal.[63] Ironically enough, then, the cover image for the first printings of the volume showed a mosque that was decidedly out of place in Indonesia, resembling a structure that looked more in keeping with India, or perhaps even the Brighton Pavilion and Hamka's own Azhar in Jakarta. Yet, this seems not to have mattered, given that the primary assertion was one of cultural ownership and *de facto* definition of Indonesia as a Muslim space. Now it was time for every student and aspirant scholar to discover more.

A chaotic end

Of course, as noted already, the equation of Indonesia with Islam was hardly the dominant view in elite politics in 1963. This was what the conveners had wanted to change, after all. Hamka would soon fall victim to Sukarno's antisubversion regulations, being placed under arrest in late January of 1964. Despite clearly being innocent of the charge of colluding with Malaysia, he would see out the cataclysmic September 1965 communist coup and immediate countercoup of General Suharto in internal exile.[64] He was only released in 1966, and well after the latter had secured control and commenced his "New Order" rule using the youth wing of the traditionalist Muslim Nahdlatul Ulama to wipe out the PKI.

Such deployments apparently caused few concerns. As a fellow traveler of the reformist movement, Sju'aib Sastradiwirja would write in a letter to Pijper in January 1966:

> In closing I would just like to allude a little to the precarious climate in our homeland, Indonesia. You will surely know that this climate has been afflicted by the infection of communism in general and the P.K.I. in particular. But no matter how terrible the suffering of Indonesia, [we shall] nourish the wisdom that opens the eyes of the Muslim community to remove all that is unGodly from the land of God (Indonesia). Everything shall be done with recourse to the Sunnah of God.[65]

With much of the cleansing done, if hardly by Sunni means, political Islam would be kept on a short leash thereafter as former Masyumi cadres were released from prison but kept at arm's length from power. It would not be until 1975 that Hamka could assume a place in the national hierarchy as chair of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia). This was in essence a rubber stamp council for Suharto's developmentalist agenda that asserted the primacy of Pancasila and its new champion.[66]

Perhaps the most tragic survivor of September 30 was the Medan seminar's eminent backer, General Nasution, who narrowly escaped being executed by communist soldiers. He would fade from public view in the coming years, paralyzed by grief over the death of his daughter as a result of the raid that had failed to capture him, and soon checked by the ambitions of his erstwhile subordinate, who had little time for Islam as an overriding expression of identity for his security state. That time would come, of course, but not until 1991, when televisions across the nation tracked the pilgrimage of their aging strongman, now Haji Muhammad Suharto. His reign would last seven more years until the Asian Economic Crisis and the birth of the era of Reformasi, sometimes Islamic, always contested.

Conclusion

The claiming of an Islamic past and thus the defining moment in the formation of Indonesian culture remains a project in motion and a highly contested one at that. Today, however, it is the partisans of the traditionalist Nadlatul Ulama,

rather than the Cairene Salafists, who are key in asserting that, for centuries, there has been a thing called Islam Nusantara, born of the fusion of Arab Islam and Indonesia's famed culture of openness, though with decidedly mystical inflections stemming from Hadramawt rather than India. At first sight, my own work examining the Dutch project of seeing and defining Indonesian Islam as inherently mystical has been playfully translated as "the History of Nusantaran Islam," apparently giving Western scholarly validation to a modern Indonesian perception. However, a second glance at the cover will show that a diminutive preposition gives the title a slightly more accurate bent as "the History of Islam *in* Nusantara."

In or of Nusantara. It makes a difference. Seen with the hindsight of today's climate of public Islamization and the sharp suppression of heterodox movements, and even the imprisoning of Jakarta's governor on trumped-up charges of blasphemy, the 1963 seminar would seem more a stepping-stone to the future than the dead end that it was for many who then called for Muslim opposition to the PKI or the end of one-party rule. Yet in many respects it was akin to the other moments examined in this volume. There was a palpable anxiety about the return of the colonial, and hence an overall desire to expunge the parameters of colonial scholarship in defining the Indonesian past. After all, this was the only period that Islamists like Hamka, academics like Mansoer, or even traditionalists like Zuhri could safely contest in the face of the PKI, who had their eyes firmly fixed on Jakarta and certainly not Mecca.

Notes

1 *Risalah Seminar Sejarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia: Kumpulan pedato, restu dan pendapat para pemimpin, pemasaran dan pemanding dalam Seminar tgl. 17 sampai 20 Maret 1963 di Medan* (Medan: Panitia Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia Medan, 1963).

2 Muhammad Yamin, *Gadjah Mada: Pahlawan Persatuan Nusantara*, 4th edn. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1953).

3 Sanusi Pane, *Sedjarah Indonesia*, 2 vols., 6th edn. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka/Perpustakaan Perguruan Kementrian P.P. dan K., 1955–56). See also Marieke Bloembergen, "Borobudur in the Light of Asia: Scholars, Pilgrims, and Knowledge Networks of Greater India," in *Belonging across the Bay of Bengal: Religious Rites, Colonial Migrations, National Rights*, ed. Michael Laffan (London etc.: Bloomsbury, 2017), 35–56.

4 Pane, *Sedjarah Indonesia*, I, 155.

5 Moh. Kasim and Oejang S. Gana, *Zaman Dahulu, Sekarang dan Jang Akan Datang*, 3 vols. (Bandung, Jakarta and Amsterdam: Ganaco, 1953–56), on the arrival of Islam, see Vol. I, pp. 112 ff.

6 On Balai Pustaka, see Doris Jedamski, "Balai Pustaka: A Colonial Wolf in Sheep's Clothing." *Archipel* 44, no. 1 (1992): 23–46. On the nationalization of Dutch business interests, see Jasper Van De Kerkhof, "Indonesianisasi of Dutch Economic Interests, 1930–1960: The Case of Internatio." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 161, nos. 2–3 (2005): 181–209.

7 The reference to "scientific" methods and indigenous sources was frequent in the volume, starting with the address of the governor of North Sumatra, Radja Djundjungan, and its patron General Nasution. See, for instances, *Risalah Seminar*, 17, 36.

8 On Hamka, see Jeff Hadler, "Home, Fatherhood, Succession: Three Generations of Amrullahs in Twentieth-Century Indonesia." *Indonesia* 65 (April 1998): 123–54; James C. Rush, *Hamka's Great Story: A Master Writer's Vision of Islam for Modern Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016). For the issue of collaboration under the Japanese, see Ethan Mark, "Asia's' Transwar Lineage: Nationalism, Marxism, and 'Greater Asia' in an Indonesian Inflection." *Journal of Asian Studies* 65, 3 (2006): 461–93.

9 Umar Said Tjokroaminoto, *Islam dan Socialisme: tertulis di Mataram dalam bulan November 1924*, 4th edn. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1950). As has already been noted in this volume, Cokroaminoto simply translated a work in English by the Indian Muslim Mushir Husain Kidwai. See Kevin Fogg, "Indonesian Islamic Socialism and its South Asian Roots," *Modern Asian Studies*, forthcoming.

10 On Misbach, see Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), esp. 127–65.

11 *Risalah Seminar*, 35.

12 Keith Foulcher, "*Sumpah Pemuda*: The Making and Meaning of a Symbol of Indonesian Nationhood." *Asian Studies Review* 24, no. 3 (2000), 377–410.

13 See Chiara Formichi, Chapter 4 of this volume; B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 15–39.

14 Chiara Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation: Kartosuwirjo and Political Islam in 20th Century Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012).

15 Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

16 The Cold War background and the Permesta are clearly described in Rémy Madinier, "*Lawan dan Kawan* (Friends and Foes): Indonesian Islam and Communism during the Cold War (1945–1960)," in *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945–1962*, eds. Christopher E. Goscha and Christian F. Ostermann (Washington, DC and Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Center and Stanford, 2009), 356–76.

17 On Hamka's base, see Rush, *Hamka's Great Story*, 131–36. In accepting his degree, Hamka had spoken of the influence of Muhammad Abduh on his nation. Hamka, *Pengaruh Muhammad 'Abduh di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Tjintamas, [1958]).

18 For a dismal assessment of indigenous publishing at Medan into the 1910s, see Ahmat B. Adam, *The Vernacular Press and the Emergence of Modern Indonesian Consciousness* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asian Studies Program, 1995), 149–50.

19 Elizabeth Lambourn, "The Formation of the Batu Aceh Tradition in Fifteenth Century Samudera-Pasai." *Indonesia and the Malay World* 32, 93 (2004): 211–48.

20 See *Kongres Bahasa Indonesia Tahun 1954 28 Oktober–2 Nopember di Medan.* N.d. n.p.; also Muhammad Yamin, *Pertumbuhan Bahasa Indonésia Dalam Abad Proklamasi*; S. Takdir Alisjahbana (ed.), *Pembina Bahasa Indonesia: Madjalah Bulanan untuk Memadjukan Bahasa Indonèsia* 1–6 (July–December 1954). Note that these publications can all be accessed at the EFEO Library in Paris, Call Number BAA 50.

21 *Risalah Seminar*, 72.

22 Soekarno, *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi* (np., 1959), *passim*.

23 *Risalah Seminar*, front matter.

24 In fact, Nasution would be more than outdone by the contribution of Ali Hasyimy (1914–98), the then governor of Aceh and amateur historian who would link Islam to anticolonial struggle in his studies of the Acehnese resistance. See, for example,

Ali Hasjmy, *Hikajat prang sabi mendjiwai perang Atjeh lawan Belanda* (Banda Atjeh: Pustaka Faraby, 1971).

25 Rush, *Hamka's Great Story*, 136–40. On Manfaluti, see Boutros Hallaq, "La Littérature Selon Manfalūṭī." *Arabica* 50, no. 2 (2003): 131–76. To be sure, the question of plagiarism loomed in many Islamist discussions, and was even evoked in the writings of Ahmad Hassan when corresponding with the Dutch orientalist Pijper. See Ahmad Hassan to G.F. Pijper, Bandung, 31 February 1950, in Leiden University Library, Or. 26.337.

26 Zuhri's speech would be read by the future minister for religion under Suharto, Mukti Ali. On Mukti Ali, see Megan Abbas, "Knowing Islam: the entangled history of western academia and modern Islamic thought," PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2015.

27 *Risalah Seminar*, 166; see also M. Natsir, "Sekolah Tinggi Islam," in M. Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, 2 vols., 2nd edn. (Bandung: Sumur Bandung, 1961–), I, 66–79, esp. 71.

28 William Roff, "Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920's." *Indonesia* 9 (1970): 73–87; Michael Laffan, "An Indonesian community in Cairo: Continuity and Change in a Cosmopolitan Islamic Milieu." *Indonesia* 77 (April 2004): 1–26.

29 See his *Riwajat Kedatangan Islam ke Indonesia* (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1960).

30 A. Teeuw "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai and Sějarah Mělayu," in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays Presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his Eighty-Fifth Birthday*, eds. John Bastin and R. Roolvink (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 222–34.

31 In his first letter to Pijper, Hamka wrote of having invested time to learning how to read Dutch newspapers in Medan in 1938. Hamka to Pijper, Jakarta, September 19, 1951, in Leiden University Library, Or. 26.337.

32 It is somewhat ironic in this regard that Hamka would have been using several Jawi texts that had in fact first been brought to press by Dutch editors, including his preferred edition of the *Hikayat Abdallah*. See, for instance, *Hikayat Abdallah bin Abd al-Qadir*, 7th edn. (Singapore: Melayu Publishing House, 1939).

33 C. Snouck Hurgronje, "L'Arabie et les Indes Néerlandaises," in *Verspreide Geschriften van C. Snouck Hurgronje*, 6 vols, (Bonn and Leipzig: Kurt Schroeder, 1922–24), IV, part 2, 97–114, esp. 105–09.

34 The subject of Indian migration is taken up by Sunil S. Amrith in his *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2013).

35 On Raniri, see Paul Wormser, *Le* Bustan al-Salatin *de Nuruddin ar-Raniri: Réflexions sur le rôle culturel d'un étranger dans le monde malais au XVIIe siècle*, Cahiers d'Archipel, 41 (Paris 2012).

36 See Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

37 *Risalah Seminar*, 268. On the term *labbai* and its alternates, see Torsten Tschacher, "Circulating Islam: Understanding Convergence and Divergence in the Islamic traditions of Ma'bar and Nusantara," in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, eds. R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea, 48–67 (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), esp 52–53. For a revived discussion of the Shi'i heritage in Southeast Asia, see *Shi'ism in Southeast Asia: 'Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions*, Chiara Formichi and R. Michael Feener, eds. (London: Hurst & Company, 2015).

38 See Sayyid Muhammad S. Nainar, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India* (University of Madras, 1942).

39 On the Greater India Society, see Susan Bayly, "Imagining 'Greater India': French and Indian Visions of Colonialism in the Indic Mode." *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 3 (July 2004): 703–44; and Bloembergen, "Borobudur in the Light of Asia." It is worth noting that the Indonesian government was also interested in official Indian sanctioning of Balinese religion as Hinduism in the 1950s. See Michel Picard, "Balinese Religion in Search of Recognition: From *Agama Hindu Bali* to *Agama Hindu* (1945–1965)," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 167, no. 4 (2011): 482–510.
40 Muhammad Husayn Nainar, "Java as Noticed by Arab Geographers," *Bulletin of the Department of Arabic, Persian and Urdu* 6 (University of Madras, 1953), 27.
41 Mansoer cited the title as *Islam di India dan hubungan-hubangannya dengan Indonesia*, though he quoted the text in English.
42 *Risalah Seminar*, 68–69.
43 Ibid., 70.
44 See Haddad, *Sedjarah perkembangan Islam di Timur Djauh* (Jakarta: Almaktab Addaimi, 1957).
45 Saleeby was the well-known author of what is now seen as the definitive work on the people he lumped together as "the Moros". See Najeeb Mitry Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild; Detroit: Cellar Book Shop, 1976).
46 See his *al-Khilafa aw al-imama al-ʿuzma* (Cairo: Matbaʿat al-Manar, 1341). Such arguments of doctrinal proximity were also made in Yemen itself in the 1930s by reviving some of the ideas of the scholar Muhammad al-Shawkani (1759–1834). See Bernard Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkani* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 209.
47 *Risalah Seminar*, 78.
48 Ibid., 79.
49 Hamka's address was a surprise to Michael Feener and myself some years after imagining that we had rediscovered a lost Jawi of the thirteenth century. Cf. Feener and Laffan, "Sufi Scents across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam." *Archipel* 70 (2005): 185–208.
50 *Risalah Seminar*, 81.
51 Ibid., 166.
52 Ibid., 244.
53 Ibid., 81–83. Regarding Snouck and the question of migration, see Huub de Jonge, "Contradictory and Against the Grain: Snouck Hurgronje on the Hadramis in the Dutch East Indies," in *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, eds. Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 219–34.
54 *Risalah Seminar*, 81.
55 Hamka to Pijper, September 19, 1951, in Leiden University Library, Or. 26.337. This connection is certainly curious, given Hamka's father's determined opposition to the Ahmadiyya, which had begun to make inroads in Java in 1922, and with some encouragement from Tjokroaminoto. On their subsequent break, caused in part by the objections of Haji Rasul and Rashid Rida to Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'an, see Moch Nur Ichwan, "Differing Responses to an Ahmadi Translation and Exegesis: *The Holy Qur'ân* in Egypt and Indonesia." *Archipel* 62, no. 1 (2001): 143–61.
56 *Risalah Seminar*, 81.
57 Ibid., 82.

58 Hamka to Pijper, 19 September 1951, in Leiden University Library, Or. 26.337.
59 Hamka to Pijper, 24 December 1955, in Leiden University Library, Or. 26.337.
60 G.W.J. Drewes, "New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 124, 4 (1968): 433–59, esp. 435–36.
61 For Mansoer's warning, see *Risalah Seminar*, 175.
62 *Risalah Seminar*, 167.
63 Bloembergen, "Borobudur in the Light of Asia," 45.
64 Rush, *Hamka's Great Story*, 143–51.
65 Sju'aib Sastradiwirja to Pijper, Jakarta, 22 Ramadan 1285, in Leiden University Library, Or. 26.337.
66 Rush, *Hamka's Great Story*, 154 ff.

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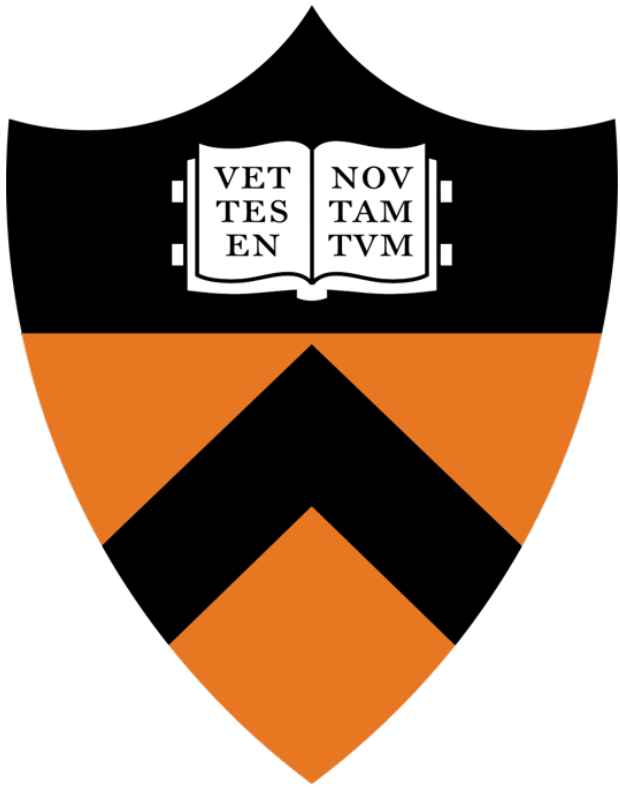

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